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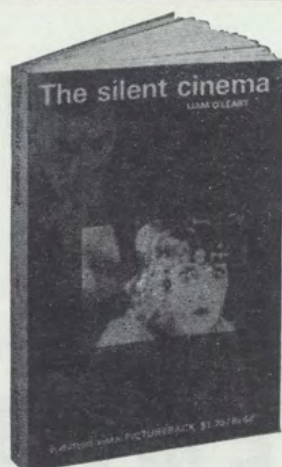
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THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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A Letter to the Minister

DEAR MISS LEE,

The Government's policy for the arts, stated in the White Paper published at the end of February, makes you the Minister responsible for the British Film Institute, on whose support SIGHT AND SOUND depends. This is an event to be welcomed, as is the White Paper's general ambition for "a gayer and more cultivated Britain," and its stress on encouragement for "the living artist." The increase in the Arts Council grant, and the more humble increase in the Film Institute's own grant, are cheering first steps.

You got the White Paper out in not much over the hundred days, and in the circumstances it cannot effectively be more than a statement of intent. All the same it is full of suggestions: more regional activity, concern for the future of the great orchestras, possible benefits for authors and young artists. But there is in all this one baffling omission: the film, the disregarded art. The White Paper incorporates only two references of any substance: a six-line paragraph on page nine, rather scantily informative about the British Film Institute; and a six-line paragraph on page nineteen, mentioning the "concern . . . that the independent producer should not be crowded out," and the fact that the question of the supply of films to exhibitors has been referred (by the previous Government) to the Monopolies Commission.

"Advertisements, buildings, books, motor cars, radio and television, magazines, records, all can carry a cultural aspect . . ." Where is the cinema in that list? Radio and television "have enormous opportunities in the sphere of the arts." But not films? As far as the White Paper is concerned, the cinema would hardly seem to count among the arts, or indeed among the educational forces. It looks less like the poor relation, than the unmentionable member of the family.

This, however, is only a beginning. No doubt your Department will be investigating what is being done, and considering what might be done, in all sorts of areas. Perhaps it might not be presumptuous to suggest a few of the many directions you might find worth exploring, when you come, as no doubt you will, to the cinema.

1. Elsewhere in this issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, we discuss the present situation of British feature production, now so largely under American control. You may not feel this matters much, since the Americans are keeping up employment in the industry, but you might also think that, in long-term interests, it would be as well if anything possible were done to stimulate British production, and particularly the kind of production which is not too dependent on an international market. There is the question, for instance, of a prize system for 'films of quality' (either shorts, or features, or both) as operated in France and elsewhere in Europe. Industry opinion here does not seem to feel that there is any strong demand or need for such a stimulus. But your particular concern will be with the prestige of an art, and you might find it worth looking into the arguments for and against, particularly in relation to the European experience. A prize system could not solve everything, and might well turn out to solve nothing. On the other hand, this particular carrot would seem to have done quite a bit for the French donkey.

2. The White Paper sympathetically raises the question of opportunities for young artists. You might consider the case of some of the unemployed, or infrequently employed, talents in

British films, and the waste of energy this involves. The history of films like the Brownlow-Mollo *It Happened Here*, or Anthony Simmons' new *Four in the Morning*, made in fits and starts as the money becomes available and ending in the inevitable hunt for a distributor, illustrates the quality of persistence and stamina demanded of those trying to work independently. Without encroaching at all on the area of the Monopolies Commission investigation, you might like to consider what action, if any, could possibly be taken on behalf of young and adventurous film-makers and (which amounts to the same thing) of the minority audiences who might profit from seeing their work.

3. In connection with this, we hope you might be interested in taking down some of those plans for a national film school which have been kicked around for so many years, and considering whether, in this field, piecemeal experiments can ever achieve the desired results; and, in any case, what results are desired, particularly in an area of such wide Commonwealth interest.

4. It might be worth looking into the operations of the Swedish Film Institute, set up in 1963 with much broader terms of reference than anything ever envisaged for the BFI, to see the lines on which some continental countries are thinking, and the kind of support they feel they can afford to give (or cannot afford not to give) to the whole concept of the film as an art. There is also the French example, and M. André Malraux's statements concerning a policy of risk—not least in an area of increasing importance, that of national representation abroad at festivals. Britain is inclined to regard such matters as not tremendously important: but here, at least, prestige follows the film. All this is not to suggest that we should set out to copy continental models. But in seeing how they order things abroad, one does find a new awareness at least of possibilities at home.

5. The British Film Institute, in its recent *A Report 1965*, stressed its own case for expansion, and the extent to which it felt itself to be falling down on its job because of shortage of finance. The Institute has met a very encouraging response to its endeavour to think in regional terms by way of setting up National Film Theatre operations outside London, and will soon be publishing a progress report. This, of course, fits the White Paper's general stress on regional development, but needs central organisation and backing. And, it might be remembered, film is one of the easiest things to transport, as well as being the most international of all the art forms.

You will be listening to a great many theories from a great many quarters. We are not putting forward theories here: merely confidently hoping that the White Paper does not express the full extent of the Government's concern for the film. This is a modern art, about which there is a clear case for some modern thinking.

* * *

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GERTRUD

ELLIOTT STEIN

CARL DREYER'S *GERTRUD* was given its world première in Paris on December 19, 1964. Previous to the film's central action, the heroine has had a nightmare, in which, naked, running through a wood, she is set upon by a pack of snarling dogs. The dream turns out to be prophetic, for later, during a scene building up to the discovery of her lover's betrayal, Gertrud sits down near a tapestry she had never seen before—with a start she notices that the woven picture is the very image of beauty attacked which had disturbed her sleep. Unfortunately, it has turned out that more of a presage was involved than Dreyer could have known while shooting his masterpiece.

It had seemed natural and fitting for the Danish director's first film since *Ordet* (1954) to be premièred in France. Dreyer had always been considered more of a prophet by cineastes there than in his own country. *Vampyr* and *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* were both made in France; and in retrospect, the latter appears the consummation of many elements of the French avant-garde of the Twenties.

The Cinémathèque Française mounted a Dreyer *hommage* in December, French TV screened *Ordet*, and the 76-year-old director arrived in Paris to be greeted by a flurry of receptions and respectful interviews. And then it happened. It happened with all the hysteria and insecure aggression of a spontaneous, unexpected lynching: the main titles had barely disappeared from the screen at the opening night press show, when a deluge of full-mouthed jeers and catcalls began which continued with such force throughout the evening that the sound-track was eclipsed. Protests were few. Moreover, a glance at the newspapers the next day revealed that the scandal was not attributable to the mindless superciliousness of *le tout Paris*—that fashionable mobilisation of nonentities invited to gala openings in the French capital. The reviews were a bouquet of spite and scorn such as had never been flung at the most meretricious of Gallic Z-nudie movies or even at any of the works of Veit Harlan shown in France since the war.

I have now seen *Gertrud* four times, and am convinced that it is Dreyer's finest, most perfect work. But if it *had* disappointed or marked decline, the man's near half-century career of unparalleled integrity and genius would none the less have already provided us with several of the cinema's supreme accomplishments; and the chorus of pathological Parisian snarls, obscenities and personal abuse which greeted *Gertrud* would have been no less misplaced and offensive. Since it is a *chef d'oeuvre*, the *gaffe* provided the greatest miscarriage of judgment of this generation.

* * *

The minority voices raised in praise followed no party or chapel line. They included the Marxist film historian Georges Sadoul, two Catholic papers (*La Croix* and *Télérama*) and Henri Chapier, critic for the independent morning daily *Combat*, whose ardent defence of Dreyer made him the laughing-stock of many of his colleagues. *Le Monde* opined that one would either hate the film or love it passionately.

Most of the other critics seemed insulted that *Gertrud* was even being shown in France, as if the national honour had been impugned. This in spite of the fact that the film is shot through with a moving homage to French culture: the heroine dreams of leaving provincial Scandinavia to study at the Sorbonne, a friend presents her with a book he has written on Racine, she is intrigued at the news of Charcot's experiments, Paris symbolises independence and intellectual freedom, etc.

Post-war French film criticism's world-wide reputation rests not only on its own merits, but on the success of the New

Wave, which it spawned. Perhaps a revaluation is overdue; the better elements among the spawned are now making films, not writing reviews, and although this reputation was not usurped, it must be kept in mind that it sprang from the theories of one specialised monthly. This is not to contest anyone's right to dislike *Gertrud*. I do contest the vulgar glee apparent in what seemed a mass attempt to demolish a great artist. Parisian opinion-makers are past masters at burning their idols, from some genetic Cartesian necessity to prove that they won't be *cocu*: but this time they've gone too far. There is now enough recent evidence that, generalisations about *Cahiers du Cinéma* notwithstanding, the present critics for dailies and weeklies in the capital loom as autocrats of philistinism. Some plums picked at random will make this clear:

L'Express: "Gertrud is an *emmerdeuse*."

Arts, the "Weekly Journal of the Intellectual Elite," printed, underneath a large headline reading "Let's Let Dreyer Sleep In Peace": "Yes, we French like to be cruel, and have no pity to spare for hackneyed emotions . . . an elephant with the brain of a walnut."

Cinéma 65 (at the time of writing, the only one of the specialised film monthlies to have appeared with a review*): "Dreyer has gone from serenity to senility . . . Not a film, but a two-hour long study of sofas and pianos . . . pompous mediocrity . . . incompetent. A dishonest farce, stillborn acting. It's hard not to scream with laughter while watching the heroine make monkey faces . . . The director of *Day of Wrath* is now the weasel-faced father-confessor for high-society love affairs . . . This bunch of old 'ham' actors all have tired backsides, they can't wait to sit down and sing clichés about their love for the bald soprano . . . Dreyer's camera is like a paralysed camel." *Cinéma 65* was so busy screaming with laughter, it decided that the action takes place in 1830—whereas all of *Gertrud* is set in a carefully described upper-middle class society shortly before World War One, except for the epilogue in 1942, when we last see the heroine after she had studied psychoanalysis.

The palm for self-indulgent exhibitionism goes to Michel Cournot, whose "review" in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris's leading left-wing weekly) was composed in the form of an obituary for Dreyer, entitled "The Dear Departed." It read: "Messiaen was playing the organ as I arrived at the hotel, where a nurse told me I could only interview the corpse for 15 seconds . . . A Danish throne on tyres was wheeled in; Dreyer was sleeping in it. The nurse gave him an injection, he awakened and granted me the following interview:

—My film is execrable, that's why I'm seeing the press before the screening.

—How do you earn your living when not making movies?

—The Danish government is glad to pay me money *not* to make films.

—Why is the world première of *Gertrud* in Paris?

—I asked for the Congo, Bolivia or Tibet. It would have been less risky. They refused; the film's too bad for them there. In Paris, they'll show anything.

"I went to the press screening and discovered that the film lasts seven and a half hours. Because when someone lends

Dreyer a camera, once every ten years, he thinks he has the right to *emmerder* everybody. After the audience had been snoring for two hours, I left, stepping over the cataleptic bodies . . ."

* * *

To no one's surprise, Dreyer's film was quickly removed from the Champs-Élysées, and replaced by a hasty revival of *James Bond Plus Formidable que Jamais dans BONS BAISERS DE RUSSIE*.

Gertrud is based on a play written around 1919 by Hjalmar Söderberg, a disciple of Strindberg. Its heroine is a retired opera singer, approaching 40 and still beautiful. Intellectual and atheist, proud and courageous, but brimming with untapped love, she is in every way superior to the hidebound males who surround her: a poet (Lidman), with whom she had lived until the day she understood that he preferred writing about passion to experiencing it; a lawyer (Kanning) whom she marries—he proves an insensitive careerist (his appointment as cabinet minister is the film's opening action) and she realises that her principal function will be to act as elegant aide to his political ambitions; and a young avant-garde composer (Erland) whom she loves, but who is merely amused at an adventure with a woman a social class above him. The fiery lover turns out to be a youthful version of her stuffy husband. Both men propose *ménage à trois* as a solution, but she leaves husband and country, choosing a life of study and solitude. In the epilogue, an old friend visits Gertrud at 70. She is content to have known love, even though it was for an unworthy object, and does not regret her lucid refusal to compromise.

Since a Dreyer filmography reads like a ledger full of witchcraft, superstition and mysticism, this plot summary must make *Gertrud* sound like a break with the past. But beneath its naturalistic surface, its near-Ibsen conflicts, it is his most mysterious and personal, most *supernatural* film, glowing with a more secret magic than any previous work. It unfolds like a single abstract thought. While separate shots from *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* may provide gorgeous stills, *Jeanne* is primitive and undynamic in comparison—no single photo from *Gertrud* imparts any idea of its essential qualities. Architecture has always been an important element in Dreyer's work; he has now made a film which, taken as a whole, resembles a perfect piece of architecture, slowly revealed sequence by sequence, containing no extraneous detail. This structure may be a stumbling block to many on a first viewing (let those step forward who perceived the total interplay of voices in Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* on first hearing), at least in part because of the deliberate archaism with which he has retained period elements of the story, an archaism which gives him all the more freedom of sojourn with the essential. The play's 5-act division is marked by intertitled rhymed verses (spoken as if by an interior voice to the heroine); there are long-held two-shots, with actors' eyes turned almost straight at the camera, as if stagily composing themselves before a court of justice; voices are white, dialogue is framed in the conventional respectable speech of 1910; but there is constant tension between the old-fashioned picturesqueness, which although retained is not underlined, and the universalising fluid geometry of the images. The result, except for the purblind, is one of the most truly modern films in years.

The work of Henning Bendtsen (cameraman for *Ordet*) is inseparable from that of the director—a rare communion has been achieved, an austere ceremonial of forms. This hieratic quality of objects is almost un-European; Dreyer has often

*Subsequent to writing, the February *Cahiers du Cinéma* appeared and proved violently at odds with the first reviews of *Gertrud*. *Cahiers* also likens them to a dog pack; and in the critics' lists of the ten best films of 1964, *Gertrud* gets 27 mentions (out of 48 lists). 13 of the 27 select it as the best film of the year.



"GERTRUD": NINA PENS RODE AND BENDT ROTHE.

been likened to Bresson, but although *Gertrud* may sound ascetically Bressonian, the warm elegiac sadness with which it contemplates the world is close to Ozu and Mizoguchi.

Lighting has never failed to play a primordial role in Dreyer's creations; here too, *Gertrud* marks a step forward. In previous films, areas of luminosity seemed to stake out the frontiers of good and evil, creating schemes in which those forces were contained, before they clashed. Although Dreyer has stated that he does not necessarily sanction Gertrud's conduct, it is obvious that her isolated renunciation echoes more than one incident in his own career. The Manichean refulgencies of *Jeanne* and *Day of Wrath* are replaced by a rich range of mysteriously irradiating greys which vibrate as if they were a palette of many colours. The lighting is *decanted* from sequence to sequence on a wash of vibrant melancholy, illuminating the heroine's existential dilemma. Indeed, it is Dreyer's first major film in which God's presence is unfelt—Gertrud's redemption is her own lucidity.

Far from being "paralysed," the camera moves with great subtlety, not as in *Jeanne*, to track down souls and assault faces in close-up, but by attentive perception of the characters' external rationalisations of their own internal traps. An astounding *plan-séquence* introduces the banquet the town notables are offering to celebrate the 50th birthday of the poet laureate Lidman. We track past the long table lined with guests (a living portrait gallery of starched provincial self-satisfactions), then slowly crane up near an adjacent staircase and follow an ascending footman, then swerve to continue with him the length of a loggia until he reaches its limit. At this point, the lights dim, the camera retreats back through the

loggia to permit the advance of a procession of torch-bearing students, singing an encomium to Lidman. Down the staircase again, across the banquet hall with the procession, and back to the guest of honour—all of this in one great single shot. The dramatic effect of this veritable *morceau d'anthologie* is apparent in the dialogue which follows it: the complicated ceremonial is a prelude to the delivery of a speech by the student leader, thanking Lidman on behalf of the young people for writing love poetry which has enlightened an entire generation. Gertrud, the only person present capable of appreciating the irony of this particular bit of praise, is taken ill.

* * *

Casting is perfect, Nina Pens Rode fascinating in the title role. A separate study could be devoted to the inspired use of music—the way Erland's compositions integrate the psychological progression of the story. And it is most intriguing that, at 76, Dreyer has given us his first really erotic scene: the beautiful and exquisitely handled passage in which Gertrud first gives herself to her young lover.

A full-blooded, clear-minded woman, seeking, not "mad love," but true love founded in an adult relationship and based on the equality of partners, one in which she will be treated not as a woman but as a human being: far from being "hackneyed," the literal theme of Dreyer's cruelly maligned film is at least as up to date as Godard's *Une Femme Mariée*. On a formal level, it transcends its theme, its period, and will prevail over the gang of evil fairies who gathered about its cradle in Paris.

IN THE PICTURE

Occupied Industry

HOW MUCH BRITISH FILM-MAKING is American-controlled? It is a difficult question to answer precisely, although it has been estimated that it amounts to maybe as much as seventy per cent. of first features. There are the American directors now filming in Britain (Anthony Mann on *The Heroes of Telemark*, Martin Ritt on *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*), the British directors filming for American companies (David Lean's *Dr. Zhivago*, J. Lee Thompson's *Return from the Ashes*), and the whole area of films British in direction and outlook (the Beatles' film, for instance) but backed by American distributors. One way and another, there is not much going on in the British studios that can be regarded as exclusively British.

There are people who find this situation worrying. In so far as there is an occupation, it is a benevolent one, and it is certainly helping to bring work to the studios. To quarrel with it, as Sir Michael Balcon emphasised to me, would be to quarrel with people's livelihood. All the same, as Sir Michael also stressed, much the same thing has happened before—at the beginning of the war, for instance, when the Americans pulled out. An attraction for the Americans here is the Eady Money (designed, of course, to help *British* production). But it is always on the cards that one day the runaway productions could run home to Hollywood; and without them one wonders just what sort of production industry might be left to us.

If British film-makers prefer working for the Americans, it is partly (though clearly not entirely) because of the easier financing methods. The British industry has its old convention of "front money" and "end money"; the Americans, if they like a project, will offer one hundred per cent. financing, so saving the producer the trail backwards and forwards between distributors and National Film Finance Corporation. "The people doing the NFFC's job now are the Americans," bluntly says John Terry, the NFFC Secretary. Unable to compete on terms with the Americans, and seeing their traditional financing methods getting out of date, the NFFC has found itself edged into a position of supplying "small money for small films." It is with the aim of strengthening purely British sources of finance, adopting more flexible methods, and so attracting more enterprising and financially rewarding productions, that the NFFC has negotiated its recent agreement with the Rank Organisation, whereby Rank and the NFFC each put up half a million, and the National Provincial Bank (breaking, Mr. Terry points out, the traditional pattern of film finance) will permit loans up to £1,500,000. The NFFC will determine the projects; Rank benefits from the use of its studios and labs; and the films will be released through Rank cinemas.

The Federation of British Film Makers, representing most independents, has given the scheme a rather guarded welcome. To quote Sir Michael again: "One wouldn't criticise any scheme that encourages production. But, of course, this does mean a further supply of films tied to one of the major groups." This remains, as always, the crux of the problem.

There are a limited number of dates in the circuits' year, and the number left for the genuinely independent producer (in so far as he exists at all) is shrinking in a generally shrinking market. British Lion, of which Sir Michael is chairman, pursues a policy of competitive dealing, trading with either the Rank or the ABC circuit. Fine, as long as they are selling box-office winners. But no firm can turn out winners exclusively, and it is with the shakier box-office chances (which are likely to include anything adventurous or experimental) that the trouble starts. By tradition, British Lion is the focal point for independent production: their limited access to circuit release is liable to edge them out of this position, against American and other competition.

A case in point is *King and Country*. The NFFC turned this down (Mr. Terry says that he has since apologised to Joe Losey for this decision), and British Lion felt that it was too much of a risk. The firm who made it had easier access to a circuit screening. If British Lion *had* backed the picture, one wonders whether it might still be sitting on their shelves, waiting its turn for a circuit date.

This concentration of power is a general trend which may not be resistible—or indeed, be judged as against the public interest. The current investigation by the Monopolies Commission cannot, in any case, solve anyone's immediate problems. It is easy to see why producers turn to American employers, who can offer them greater security, more attractive terms, and a surer guarantee that their films will reach an audience. But American participation, of course, also increases the trend towards bigger and more expensive pictures. People

CLAIRE BLOOM AND RICHARD BURTON IN "THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD", FILMING AT ARDMORE STUDIOS.



like Balcon, whose experience and ambitions are in the range of middle-budget British films, are gambling on a swing back from all the "expensive boredom" (his phrase) now being sold to the public.

British Lion has recently announced a £2,000,000 programme, including *Modesty Blaise* (with Monica Vitti), *The Great St. Trinian's Train Robbery*, *Lord Byron* (from John Schlesinger) and the Boultings' *Who's for Sex*. Projects under the NFFC-Rank scheme will no doubt be announced in due course. But one doesn't feel that any programme can, in the present circumstances, leave much leeway for experiment. The general industry situation, as Sir Michael sees it: "Not much cinematic excitement, and not much development of the cinema as a permanent art form, but a number of first-class box-office propositions." These are, no doubt of it, the *Goldfinger* years.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

Chasing the Gorgon

THE INITIAL PROBLEM HAS two stages: information and logistics. Information means back numbers of the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, the *Manchester Evening News* on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and use of a telephone. Logistics means an A to Z of Greater Manchester, bus routes and train timetables, and constant reference to information assembled. Access to the university computer would be an advantage, but it is not readily available for the purpose. And the purpose itself? Simply to see the most and the best movies that appear in the city, often in outlying areas, with the least possible wastage of time and money. It is a game evolved originally by provincial moviemanes on short visits to London, played also by Londoners in Paris and Parisians in New York. But as a regular occupation it can also be played at home by the inhabitants of any large city, and in somewhere like Manchester it can become part of the very fabric of daily life.

Here in Manchester if you care at all about the cinema you

PRESS CONFERENCE IN MEXICO. JEANNE MOREAU AND BRIGITTE BARDOT, STARRING TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LOUIS MALLE'S COMEDY "VIVA MARIA".



must play the game, and play it seriously. The majority of films released in this country—perhaps four-fifths of the Anglo-American and over half of the continental—turn up here eventually and in some guise or other. Old films recur, particularly on Sunday afternoons and at certain key points on the map. But there is no system in it, and information about programmes is hard to come by in advance. There are some seventy cinemas in the Manchester area which advertise in the *Evening News*, plus a few which don't advertise. Of those that advertise, nearly half, including both art houses, are run from London by remote control. Managers of individual cinemas on the national circuits, and above them the local booking managers, have a limited say in what they can put on. But supply is a more important factor than demand here, and it is the availability of copies rather than the assessment of local taste which in the last analysis dictates what is going to be shown, and when, and where.

Variations in expected demand count for something, of course. Some classy films come to the centre only; some films are treated as pariahs and appear only in outlying districts. But most come to the centre first and are then shuffled off haphazardly among the locals—to towns like Salford, Oldham, Stockport and Bury, and lower down the scale among the suburban and industrial sprawl of Manchester itself. For three months now a Hammer double on British Lion release, *The Gorgon* and *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*, has been pursuing a melancholy criss-cross trek around the city. The Mario Bava-Roger Corman double of *Black Sabbath* and *The Tomb of Ligeia* has just set out on a similar course. *Lord of the Flies* is circulating slowly, mainly on the Rank circuit. *Goldfinger*, predictably, has been everywhere. Other films come and go, in the same semi-systematic way.

The circuits, even without a regular pattern of releases, are relatively predictable, and relatively uninteresting. The organised filmgoer watches them with only half an eye, confident that *My Fair Lady* will not disappear in a hurry, and will be cheaper and less crowded in a few months time, and that *The Secret Invasion*, so far seen only in Stockport, will gradually edge its way nearer to a more convenient bus route. Serious movie-going begins with the unrepeatable and the out-of-the-way in the run-down little cinemas, privately owned or on small local circuits. Here expertise becomes necessary, to recognise titles and to plan the campaign. You must be able to remember that the title of the Jacques Tourneur film is *The Flame* (not "The Sabre", which is different) and *the Arrow*, and when it comes on at the Wycliffe, Moss Side, on a Monday, you must know to go and see it on one of three evenings, as there are no afternoon performances and come Thursday the programme will have changed. You must recognise "Brett Halsey, *Magnificent Adv.*" to be the latest Riccardo Freda adventure, and know that *The Betrayer* is Rossellini's *Vanina Vanini*, albeit dubbed and lacerated almost beyond recognition. You must not be put off by the big advertisement saying "Bingo" outside the Plaza, All Saints; they show movies as well. And what looks like a hoarding over a demolition site, advertising *The Cardinal*, is a cinema too, when you get inside.

Having found all this out, you must get up and go to these places. *Attack*, *The Deadly Companions*, *The Big Heat*, *Two Rode Together*, such films may some time reappear, scaled down, on television. But for the moment it is here, if at all, that they are to be seen.

The sociology of the little cinemas is interesting—often more so than their average programmes. In South-Central Manchester, which is the area I know best, there are five or six independent or small-circuit cinemas which show the kind of films which few people, perhaps, would go out of their way to see but which remain the staple diet of large sections of the community. Wardour Street's indiscriminating box-office statistics give little idea of what is genuinely popular with different people when given a fairly free choice. The manager of the Wycliffe, Moss Side, which serves a working-class area



BUSTER KEATON IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S "FILM". PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAIN RESNAIS, PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION OF "CAHIERS DU CINEMA".

with a large West Indian minority, is quite specific about this. Other houses on the same local circuit, he says, in the middle-class suburbs of Withington and Didsbury, get fair results with recent British comedies and such. In Moss Side, however: "A Peter Sellers film? I might as well not open up. What people want is action, particularly the coloureds." He is pleased with his coloured audiences. "They make a lot of noise, but never any trouble, never." They like John Wayne, Audie Murphy, Westerns in general, and slapstick comedy including Laurel and Hardy; and roar with excitement and laughter whenever the action comes up. An American movie-culture developed back in Jamaica or Trinidad, poor housing conditions here and natural gregariousness make them continue to flock to the cinema to see these films, while the stuffy English stay home glued to the telly and occasionally venture out to indulge their Britishness in feasts of *Carry On* and *Guns at Batasi*. *Rio Bravo*, it seems, is strictly for the spades.

In general, it is the derelict, low-rent areas, with large migrant populations and impending redevelopment, that best support the traditional movie-houses. At the Grosvenor, All Saints, the audience is very mixed, with a large Irish contingent. The Plaza, nearby, runs special Sunday programmes for the less assimilated Indians and Pakistanis—again a minority which the box-office statistics can hardly be expected to record. Meanwhile the recognised minority taste, that of the "art-house audience," is officially catered for by a rep. cinema (The Classic) and a Jacey Continental (The Cinephone) in the centre of town. Unsatisfactorily catered for too, one might add, though whose fault this is cannot easily be determined. The audience for good continental and rep. films is not large. *Muriel* lasted a bare three days at the Cinephone before being ignominiously taken off. But the audience could be a lot larger if the cinemas had a more determined and go-ahead policy.

As it is the Cinephone stuffs its programmes with sexes and X's, and the Classic circuit appears to treat Manchester as an

extension of the Kilburn High Road—geographically exact, but hardly constructive. Furthermore the (once *Manchester*) *Guardian* reviews films when they come on in London, and barely notices them again when weeks later they appear here. The result is that when *Muriel*, say, comes on at the Cinephone, the potential audience is alienated and no longer interested. Fortunately, between the Film Societies at one extreme and the off-circuit cinemas at the other, the enthusiast does not have in practice to rely too heavily on the so-called art houses. But it would be nice none the less if we could have something like the Academy up here, not to mention an extension of the N.F.T. If nothing else it would save a lot of time and energy on information and logistics.

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

Project One

ONE OF THE ODDEST and most intriguing of recent film projects is currently under way in New York. Its instigators: Dick Seavers and Barney Rosset of Grove Press, the New York publishing house which specialises in the avant-garde and publishes *The Evergreen Review*, operating under the name of Evergreen Theatre, Inc. They have acquired scripts by Samuel Beckett (with the simple title of *Film*), Harold Pinter (*The Compartment*) and Ionesco (*How to Cook a Hard-Boiled Egg*), and are filming them under the working title of *Project One*.

So far, only the Beckett section is completed. Boris Kaufman is the cameraman, Sidney Meyers (*The Quiet One*), the editor, and direction is by Alan Schneider, a Beckett specialist who also directed the New York production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The main character, whose role has been described, not unpredictably, as "that of man's attempt to become invulnerable from his fellow men, and his discovery that there is no escape from himself," is played by Buster Keaton. There is no dialogue. The photograph we publish above, with the small, defiant figure pinned against a rubbish-dump wall, is by Alain Resnais.

Detailed information about *Project One* is hard to come by. One gathers that the Ionesco script includes some spectacular surrealist transitions (from egg-shells to operating tables, and gas rings to burning savannahs); and that the Beckett script has one episode in which it is necessary to get a cat and a dog out of a room, for which Beckett suggested a series of elaborate and complicated stage manoeuvres. In any case, the bold producers hope to complete their film, all three parts of it, later this year.

Buyer's Market

ELIZABETH SUSSEX writes: The chance of seeing a good film on television has increased considerably in the past six months or so. With what the *Sun* called "the battle of tired old films" between BBC-1 and ATV on Sunday afternoons and evenings (in the London region) and BBC-2's "Vintage Years of Hollywood" on Tuesday nights, the small screen is purveying nostalgia (and cinema) to an extent unimaginable a year ago. The minor revolution that has taken place dates from last August when, in what *Kine Weekly* described as "one of the quickest deals in television," Associated Television bought the United Kingdom television rights of fifty Sam Goldwyn features (most of Goldwyn's major productions, ranging from vintage Wyler to vintage Danny Kaye). The Executive Committee of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, invoking a 1962 resolution of their General Council, immediately recommended all members "not to exhibit to the public any film nor or hereafter produced by or with cinema distribution rights controlled by Mr. Goldwyn or any company under his control." As Mr. Goldwyn had retired from active producing, this measure had practically no meaning. Moreover, it was then announced that the BBC had bought more than a hundred Paramount features (among them *Duck Soup*, *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, *The Scarlet Empress*), which Paramount had sold to MCA prior to the CEA's 1962 resolution. On September 9th, 1964, a fortnight after recommending the Goldwyn ban, the CEA Executive recognised the need for reassessment and added to the 1962 resolution the proviso that it did not intend "to make any such recommendation to its members in respect of any feature film the first televising of which takes place after the expiration of five years from the date of its first general availability to exhibitors in the United Kingdom."

By revising its attitude in this way, the CEA inevitably undermined the *raison d'être* of FIDO (the Film Industry Defence Organisation set up in 1958). It also created an industry situation in which the TV columnist of *Kine Weekly* found possibilities "akin to

the first Californian Gold Rush." There followed in October the news that ABC TV was negotiating through Warner-Pathé for a hundred Warner Bros. pictures, and that ATV had purchased seventy-five United Artists films. Mr. Seymour Pode of 20th Century-Fox, according to a story in the *Financial Times*, found that deals were being done for as little as £5,000 a picture, made the comment "This is a buyer's market," and withdrew from the scene. Meanwhile ATV's Managing Director, Lew Grade, in keeping with *Kine Weekly's* assertion that his latest deal was the first in which the features were hand-picked, was describing his purchase (also according to *Kine*) as "some of the best United Artists pictures ever made." At a meeting on November 26th of the five trade organisations involved, it was decided that no further levy contributions for FIDO would be collected after January 30th, and that FIDO would cease to acquire undertakings not to show films on TV, subject to completing deals already agreed.

The door was open for British sales, and ATV was once again the first to jump in with an announcement; their purchase consisted of fifty films, some less than five years old, from the Rank Organisation. At much the same time, in January, Rediffusion Holdings bought all the Bryanston films, some of them also under five years old. One newspaper's erroneous report that the money-spinning *Tom Jones* was among them caused a slightly irrelevant stir; nobody seemed particularly concerned about the way in which the films actually bought by the commercial television companies would be shown. The BBC, according to the *Daily Express*, were "now likely to go after more recent films." Meanwhile 'natural breaks' are being discovered in *The Little Foxes*, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, *To Have and Have Not*, *Hangmen Also Die*, *Limelight*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (not to be televised, under the five year rule, before the end of 1965) and countless others that had a rather special quality seen whole and uninterrupted.

It Won't Happen Here

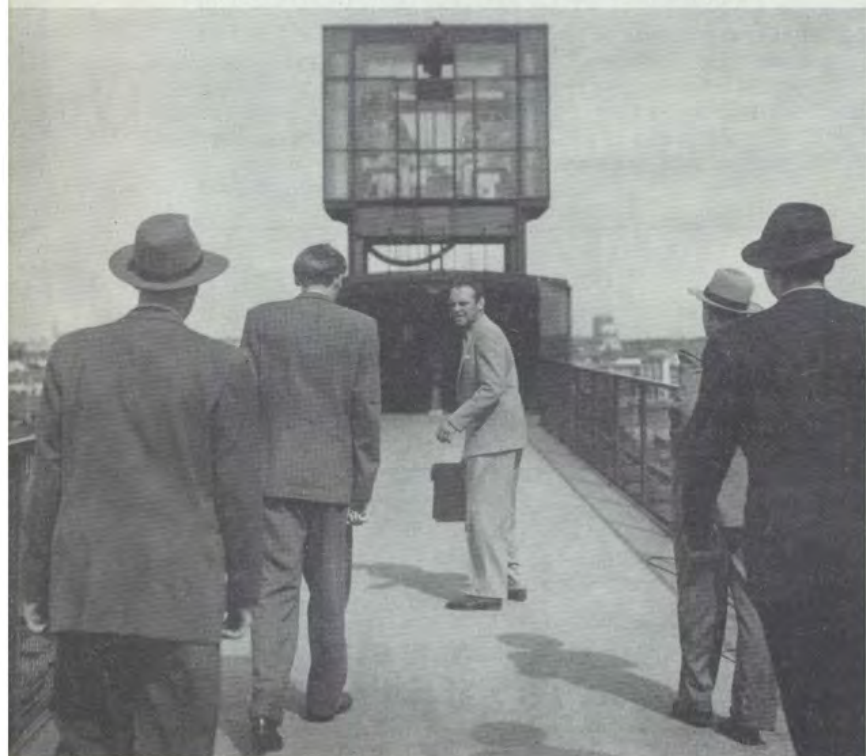
RICHARD ROUD writes: "You don't want to see *that*," they said, disparagingly. "It's only a cheap little thriller—and anyhow, Bergman will never let it be shown." That was a film made by Ingmar Bergman in 1950 called *It Can't Happen Here* (*Sant Händer Inte Här*). I was viewing a lot of little known Swedish films in Stockholm for a season at the National Film Theatre, and I *did* want to see it, partly because they didn't want me to, and partly because after seeing some of Bergman's early films modelled on arty French movies, the idea of his using American models sounded highly attractive.

Well, the Swedes are very polite, and I was allowed to see it. And it was good. The plot has to do with a bid by Fascist agents from 'Liquidatzia' to take over Sweden. Ultimately they are of course defeated, but in the meanwhile Bergman has a good deal of fun with exteriors in Stockholm. Curiously enough, the film ends with a scene which is repeated in *The Prize* (also set in Stockholm): the searching of a ship for a kidnapped lady.

Best of all is the spy stuff which, although derivative of Hitchcock, is occasionally almost as good as the master. The spies generally meet behind the screen of a cartoon cinema. Wending their way down the aisles while Donald Duck is carrying on, they go backstage and there the meetings are held—always accompanied by the sound track of Donald. Bergman also used the Hitchcock trick of making the extraordinary more extraordinary by submerging it in the ordinary. Two conspirators meet: "How are the kids?" "Fine, and how are yours?" One of their victims seems to live next door to a variety theatre: they manage to get rid of his body simply by nonchalantly carrying it across the stage where the girls are rehearsing a new routine. Thus we get the extraordinary effects of the body being seen through the legs of the dancing girls, as well as the fun of realising that nobody is paying the slightest attention to them or the body because they seem to be just going about their normal business.

Of course, it's not a great film, but it is a very entertaining one. The Swedes were right, however, about one thing: Bergman has refused to let the film be shown in the Swedish season in London. So *It Can't Happen Here* will have to join that unhappy band of films denied by their creators—like Dreyer's *Two People* (also made in Stockholm) which he refuses to have shown anywhere. The Cinéma-thèque Française somehow managed to get a print of this which they show about once in ten years. It's not a great masterpiece either, but seen in conjunction with *Gertrud* (see page 56) it is an extremely interesting first draft. If anyone ever does another festival of *films maudits* like the one in Biarritz fifteen years ago, here are two films for it. If, that is, anyone can get his hands on them.

A SCENE FROM BERGMAN'S SPY FILM "IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE".



The Missing Reel

JAY LEYDA writes: Victor Shklovsky, the most stimulating and influential film theoretician of the Soviet cinema's first years, has published a volume of memoirs touching those years, *Zhili-byli (Once Upon a Time)*. His accounts of Lev Kuleshov and Abram Room, for whom he wrote the scenarios of *By the Law* and *Bed and Sofa*, are clear and intimate. He reveals that both these small masterpieces ("failures" in their time) were motivated by his enjoyment of films where the whole action is carried by casts of three or four actors.

A considerable part of the volume is devoted to Shklovsky's memories of Eisenstein, an artist to whom he gave support in periods when Eisenstein needed it most. One such crisis was on the handling of *Potemkin*. Shklovsky was present at the screening when a studio official pronounced what very nearly became the film's fate: "Suitable for the screens of workers' clubs." A memory of more serious trouble: walking away from a screening of *October* Pudovkin said to Shklovsky, "I wish I could make a mistake as powerful as that," for *October* was generally regarded as "Eisenstein's folly."

Parts of Shklovsky's section on Eisenstein's career derive from Eisenstein's own recently published memoirs, but there's a surprise in his description of *Alexander Nevsky's* completion: "When the filming was finished, Sergei Mikhailovich lived and slept in the cutting-room. In cinema there's never enough time. The sun sets too soon, snow falls too early, then the sun melts it too fast; film people always work under pressure, and they can't even find enough time to splice their shots together. In those last weeks on *Nevsky* the people began to work day and night, quite confident that their working day contained twenty-five hours, and they turned out to be right, after all, for they succeeded. With no thought of time Eisenstein would edit, fall soundly asleep, then wake up and go on editing..."

One night they telephoned from the Kremlin—Stalin wanted to see the film. Without waking the director they gathered up the reels and hurried them off to the command screening. The film was very much liked, but Stalin did not see the whole film. One scene, of a brawl on the bridge at Novgorod, had not been given its final cutting; the reel containing the fight had been put to one side and the messengers overlooked it. This reel never got to the screening, but the gap had not been noticed. Afterwards, when the forgotten reel was brought to the attention of the official in charge of the Kremlin screening, it was decided that the film would have to be released just as it had been approved. That is how it went out to the public—and not one critic noticed anything wrong. (N.B.: *The reel is still missing.*)

Patriotism is Not Enough

BY THE TIME THIS issue of SIGHT AND SOUND appears, the British Film Academy will have announced its annual awards for 1964. At the time of going to press, however, we have only the list of nominations, which names four titles for the Best Film from Any Source (*Becket*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *The Pumpkin Eater* and *The Train*) with an almost identical list (*Becket*, *Strangelove* and *The Pumpkin Eater*, now joined by *King and Country*) for the Best British Film. This time, the Academy has adopted a new voting method: members no longer choose from a short list put forward by a selection committee, but nominate and vote in a single stage.

One result, it would seem, has been to emphasise the inbred chauvinism of British film-makers and technicians. In 1963 *Tom Jones* swept the board, but the short list of nominations for the Best Film from Any Source included four titles from Europe, along with four British and four American. This year, Europe has almost disappeared. Marcello Mastroianni (dubbed) gets a nomination as Best Foreign Actor for *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*; Bert Haanstra's *The Human Dutch* is short-listed for the Robert Flaherty Award. Otherwise, it's the English-speaking cinema all the way, and the rest nowhere. Of course, it is a *British* Film Academy, with a reasonable bias towards the home-made product. Even so, a vote on the year's best from any source which can come out three to one in favour of Britain does suggest either self-satisfaction, or extreme optimism.

Work in Progress

France

CLAUDE CHABROL: *Marie Chantal contre le Docteur Kha*, humorous spy story being made in Morocco and Chamonix, in which Michèle Mercier plays a sort of female James Bond. With Akim Tamiroff, Charles Denner, Serge Reggiani. Rome-Paris Films.



EMMANUELE RIVA IN FRANJU'S "THOMAS L'IMPOSTEUR", FROM THE COCTEAU STORY.

PHILIPPE DE BROCA: *Tribulations Chinoises en Chine*. Light-hearted adventure based on the Jules Verne novel with locations in Nepal, Hong Kong and Malaya. Jean-Paul Belmondo plays a suicidal millionaire and Ursula Andress an archaeologist turned striptease dancer.

JEAN-LUC GODARD: Completing *Une Nouvelle Aventure de Lemmy Caution* with Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina and Akim Tamiroff, and starting on *Pierrot le Fou*, from a novel by Lionel White, with Jean-Paul Belmondo.

LOUIS MALLE: *Viva Maria*, romantic comedy filmed in Mexico about two women (Brigitte Bardot and Jeanne Moreau) who meet by chance in Central America and become involved in the local revolution. Dancigers-Malle Production for United Artists release. **Great Britain**

JACK CLAYTON: Planning to film *The Looking Glass War*, scripted by John Le Carre (author of *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*) from his own spy thriller, bought prior to publication by Columbia.

FREDDIE FRANCIS: *The Skull*, about the evil which infects those who come into contact with the skull of the Marquis de Sade. With Christopher Lee, George Coulouris, Michael Gough. Amicus for Paramount.

DICK LESTER: The second Beatles film. Same stars, same technicians, plus Eleanor Bron, Eastman Colour and extensive location shooting in the Bahamas and Austrian Alps. Produced by Walter Shenson for United Artists release.

OTTO PREMINGER: *Bunny Lake is Missing*, scripted by John and Penelope Mortimer from the mystery novel by Evelyn Piper. With Laurence Olivier, Carol Lynley and Keir Dullea, for Columbia release.

TERENCE YOUNG: *Thunderball*, the most expensive James Bond picture so far, started with a Paris location for the material behind the main titles. With Sean Connery, Claudine Auger, Bernard Lee, Lois Maxwell. Eon Productions for United Artists release.

Mexico

LUIS BUNUEL: *Simon del Desierto*, about the fifth century hermit Simeon Stylites, his visions and hallucinations and the pilgrims who flocked to see him leading a life of contemplation on the top of a pillar. With Claudio Brook and Silvia Pinal.

U.S.A.

HOWARD HAWKS: *Red Line 7000* (title refers to maximum engine speed at which it's safe to operate a racing car) marks Hawks' return to the scene of *The Crowd Roars*. With Gail Hire, Laura Devon, James Ward. Laurel Productions for Paramount.

PETER USTINOV: *Lady L*, once a Cukor project, scripted by Ustinov from the Romain Gary novel, and being shot in Paris and Switzerland. Sophia Loren, as laundress to great lady, with Paul Newman, David Niven. Concordia-Champion for M.G.M.

CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT



Pierre Billard

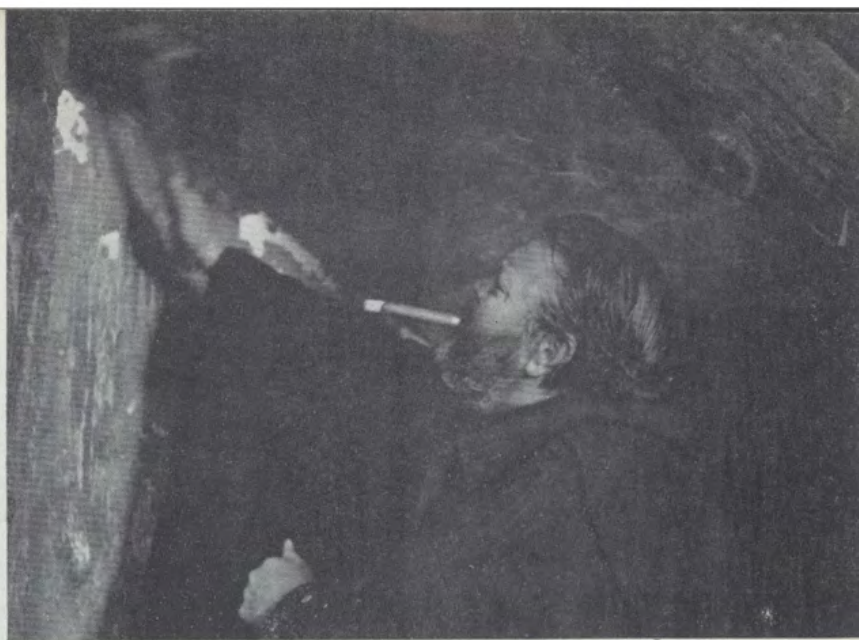
THE NEW FILM WHICH Orson Welles is just completing in Spain has been shot in conditions of maximum secrecy: its title, *Chimes at Midnight*. The scenario may be regarded as a collaboration between Welles and Shakespeare. To be more precise, it follows his stage *Chimes at Midnight*, presented at Belfast in 1960, as a drama constructed around the history of Falstaff. Welles has drawn on the plays in which Falstaff appears (both parts of *Henry IV*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*), on the references in *Henry V*, and on *Richard II* and also Holinshed's *Chronicles*, for the further light they throw on actions and motives. The focal point of the theme which he has shaped out of all this marvellous data is Falstaff's friendship with Prince Hal, and its betrayal.

A few weeks before he started shooting, Welles described his intentions: "Falstaff is the best role that Shakespeare ever wrote. He is as outsize a character as

Don Quixote. I've always wanted to play him, which is unusual, as there are very few characters who really tempt me as an actor. *Chimes at Midnight* will be a dark comedy, the story of the betrayal of a friendship. It will concentrate on the actors and there are going to be a lot of close-ups: in fact, it will be my close-up film. The number of sets available to me is so restricted that the film must be anti-baroque, and must work essentially through the faces. When the camera moves away from the faces, it uncovers period settings and actors in costume who are only going to distract from the real thing. But the closer we keep to the faces, the more universal the story becomes."

That was before. During the course of shooting, the sleeping cineaste in Welles was awakened, and he forgot these modest resolves. The kind of 'period' settings which Welles found in the little villages of Castille have remained

more or less unchanged since the Middle Ages. He had no trouble in collecting the right extras locally, exercising that extraordinary flair which remains one of the characteristics of his genius. Where the resources at his disposal did prove unequal to the demands of the script, any shortcomings on the part of sets or players will be dissolved in the dark, poetic shadows so conveniently cast by smoky torches. Little by little, the actor gave ground to the director, as the heat of action quickened his invention. In one daring scene, when Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet (Jeanne Moreau) are in bed together at Mistress Quickly's tavern in Eastcheap, he found an appropriately central position for the camera by letting it take the place of the bolster. For the scene of Henry V's coronation, shot in Cordova Cathedral, he had them build an immense platform across the cathedral, allowing him to play with perspectives and contrasts of lighting and to compose images which irresistibly recall Eisenstein. When it came



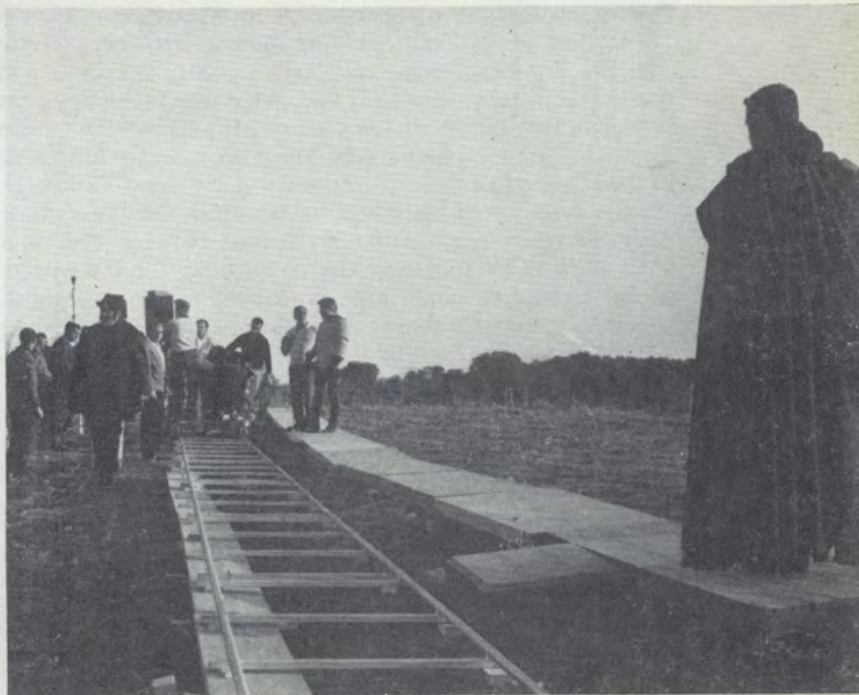
But who, in the circumstances, is likely to sympathise with the luckless producers?

On occasion, however, Welles' creative independence can begin to look like a caprice. So, feeling that his own American accent would grate on the perfect Shakespearean diction of actors such as John Gielgud (Henry IV), Margaret Rutherford (Mistress Quickly) and Keith Baxter (Prince Hal), Welles didn't want to play his dialogue scenes directly with them. While they were there, he filmed only those shots in which he doesn't appear, or reaction shots in which he doesn't speak. Then, after they had gone, he went back to the same locations, to shoot his dialogue on his own.

At the same time, Welles has begun work on a version of *Treasure Island*, adapted by himself, in which he plays Long John Silver. Jesus Franco, his Spanish assistant on *Chimes at Midnight*, is directing, and they plan to complete the film this summer. Simultaneously, the presence in Madrid of the Mexican actor Francisco Regueira has enabled him to shoot some new sequences for his *Don Quixote*, begun ten years ago and never completed. All of which is encouraging news for cineastes: the young lion of the cinema hasn't lost his roar.

to Falstaff's burial, Welles wanted the biggest coffin that could be found. They brought an old coffin about ten feet long, and when he didn't seem happy with it, they asked if perhaps it was too big. "Oh no," he answered with his huge laugh. "It's just that I would have liked one on wheels."

This verve, and this gluttonous appetite for effects, are characteristic of Orson Welles as he rediscovers the delights of creation. Tireless on the set, he moves about with disconcerting agility, even in the bulky padding which he wears for Falstaff's girth, and develops his *mise en scène* as changes of lighting bring him new ideas. For the few scenes not made on actual locations, Welles rejected studio help and had an old garage fitted up as a temporary studio, thus saving several thousand pounds. But these economies were soon swallowed up. Faithful to his reputation, which at this point at least makes contact with historical fact, Welles improvised to such an extent that he has been shooting twice as long, and has spent twice as much, as was allowed for in the initial budget.





SHAKESPEARE

Peter Brook interviewed by

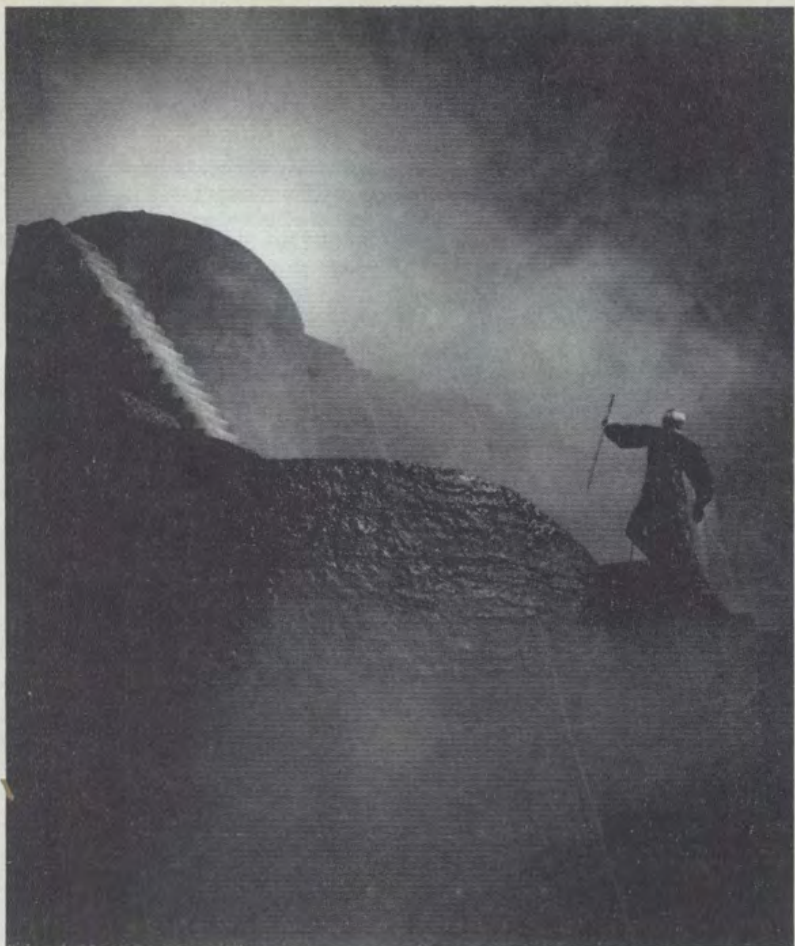
THE SAD HISTORY OF Shakespeare on the screen—which is really pretty pitiful if you think about it—is that apparently over a hundred films have been made of his plays, and most of them are unspeakably bad. What this sad history does is to recapture some of the history of Shakespeare on the stage through its worst periods. There is no golden beginning in the Elizabethan theatre: you start in the worst nineteenth century tradition of big spectacle. It's incredible the number of Shakespeare subjects that were used between 1900 and 1910, all because they gave the opportunity for the cinema to show that you could have crowds of people, masses of costumes, great epic shots, and so forth.

Then they moved on to Recording the Star Performance. So one has films designed to show off people like Barrymore, Bernhardt, Forbes-Robertson. These are recordings of big actors' solos, following the nineteenth century idea that there are these big moments in Shakespeare, and therefore—*wrong conclusion*—that this is what Shakespeare is all about. The basic wrongness of the entire nineteenth century conception of Shakespeare lies in the belief that what are seen from the outside to be undeniably the big values, the marvellous musicality of the lines, the marvellous theatricality of the situations, were therefore Shakespeare's intention. This is a very simple but totally mistaken way of thinking. The big

moments are certainly there, but they weren't the reason why the man set out to write the plays; and this is why people like Stephen Phillips, who set out to write imitation Shakespeare, could never bring it off. Instead of working like Shakespeare from a particular core, trying for something whose end product had as a by-product great situations and great lines, they set out to write great situations and great lines, so of course the result was awful.

It was exactly the same in the cinema. The producers looked for the big situations, and between the wars the cinema was dominated by big stars who all wanted to crown their careers with prestige, and all had a go at Shakespeare: Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Elisabeth Bergner, Leslie Howard, Norma Shearer. Again it's mid-nineteenth century acting, by second-rate, well-loved actors who want a go at the big parts. Artistically, it's not worth considering.

The interesting thing is that, although the cinema is the medium which has attracted the most intelligent directors of this century, none of them has been particularly interested in cracking the nut of Shakespeare on the screen. It seems to me strange that from Pabst to a theatrical director like Kazan, none of these directors has wanted to do a Shakespeare film. However there are two major, if freak, cases of talented men, actor-directors, having a go: really both Olivier and



on three screens

Geoffrey Reeves

Welles approach their Shakespeare films more as actors than as directors. They certainly like big subjects, but then so does Fritz Lang; but the fact is that they could stick *themselves* into the middle of those big subjects. So that, up to very recently, the two best Shakespeare films—in fact the first two attempts at filming Shakespeare that one can think of seriously—are by *theatre standards* late nineteenth century productions, of the sort where an intelligent actor-manager put on his *Henry V* or *Othello*, viewed entirely from the actor-manager's point of view. If one looks at Welles' *Othello* and *Macbeth* in cold blood, they don't begin to compare with his attempts at Cinema, *Kane* and *Ambersons*, which are objective pieces of film directing with the actor's performance subordinated to the whole. Welles clearly loved acting in *Citizen Kane*, but this is a piece of film thinking; in *Macbeth*, this is the man who loves the smell of greasepaint doing a rare actor-manager's version of *Macbeth* and getting the cameras to follow him around. I think the same goes for a lot of *Othello*.

Olivier's films succeed, to the degree that they succeed at all, by having the classic English virtues of quality and good taste: into this world comes the Rolls-Royce of Shakespearean film-making. *Henry V* was a landmark because no producer before that had had the intelligence to think that he could, for his money, buy good performances. When Reinhardt,

with all that money, did his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, it didn't occur to him that he could, at that very period, have persuaded Ralph Richardson, Laurence Olivier and John Gielgud to come to Hollywood and play for him. Instead he had James Cagney, Joe E. Brown and Mickey Rooney in a farcical sort of joke film.

* * *

The thing that Olivier is most quoted for and is most proud of, was to invent a gimmick—as a very practical actor, it was naturally an actor-manager's gimmick. This was to say that the big stuff, the Shakespearean big speeches, are embarrassing in close-up: therefore you come into close-up for the unimportant thing, and as a soliloquy develops and broadens, gets epic and big, you pull the camera away to a high shot so that the actor isn't embarrassed by being shown grimacing on the big stuff. This is a real actor's directing solution. It's a purely stylistic one, like an actor in a play saying he feels better placed centre stage than downstage for a particular speech. That is a very different kind of theatre from the one where the moves and the business and objects and everything else come from a sense of meaning, so that you may say to

LEFT TO RIGHT: OPHELIA'S FUNERAL PROCESSION IN KOZINTSEV'S "HAMLET"; OLIVIER'S HAMLET ON THE BATTLEMENTS OF ELSINORE; MIFUNE'S WARLORD MACBETH IN "THRONE OF BLOOD".



HAVING A GO: MARY PICKFORD IN "THE TAMING OF THE SHREW".

the actor, "This may be the big bit, but if it's done in a big way it will be against the real meaning of the play; so you've got to do it in a bad position in a small way." And the same thing is true of the cinema; the idea that the placing of the camera can be done in terms of "This speech is a big one so we won't use a close-up" is too primitive. *Henry V*, which is Olivier's best film, shows this—the *Hamlet* was a terrible simplification, less than half the text and a millionth bit of the meaning. The same thing goes even more for *Richard III*, which seems terribly operatic now, decorative, and with no real core of action or meaning.

Then there was that awful *Romeo and Juliet* that isn't even worth talking about, Castellani's Italian neo-realistic one. You can't just put a lot of people together who can't act, get them to walk around in real settings, and think it's neo-realistic . . . it's just pathetic. So you come to the two serious pieces of work: the Soviet *Hamlet* and the Japanese *Macbeth*. Mankiewicz's *Julius Caesar* is the stepping-stone to Kozintsev because it came from an intelligent reading of the play. The whole thing was built up from meanings. Mankiewicz isn't a very imaginative director, but here was an intelligent man who assessed what he thought the play was about, and then set in his own way about putting it on the screen.

The Kozintsev film is attacked for being academic, which it is, but there is not a thing which comes on to the screen, whether it is his selection of the place, of the type of castle, of the fact that Hamlet meets Ophelia on a staircase, or whether there are people in the background or not—there is not a selection which doesn't relate to this man's carefully thought out structure and meaning. The film has a strength and a clarity which come entirely from that. It has all the strength and virtues of Olivier, of having good actors, and being well and expensively done; but this is the first time that there is the proper directorial approach of a man working from his own conviction of what the real threads of meaning are, not the theatrical meaning but the actual meaning of the play. That is why I think it's the first good Shakespeare film.

I talked to Kozintsev in Paris. He knows where he stands in his own thinking, politically, socially; he knows where he stands in more epic terms; he knows what stone and fire mean

to him, and bars and wood, all those different elements that he uses; he knows what his blackness and his whiteness, his full screen and his anti-screen, his close-ups and his long shots, all relate to in terms of content; and you feel his film is much firmer than any of the others. The great thing about this *Hamlet* is that Kozintsev wanted to get away from the Russian theatrical tradition of the operatic. He used the new Pasternak translation which is much colder, quicker and more realistic than the traditional nineteenth century translation; and he didn't use a single theatre actor—none of them has ever played Shakespeare on the stage. So I can see what he was looking for. The film's limitation, though, is that it is within a style; and that style, which is a very attractive post-Eisenstein romantic one, is still not essentially the right Shakespearean style.

The great masterpiece, of course, is the Kurosawa film, *Throne of Blood*, which doesn't really come into the Shakespeare question at all because it doesn't have the text. Even though Kurosawa follows the plot very closely, transposing it into Japan in the Middle Ages and making *Macbeth* a samurai, he has new Japanese dialogue and is really doing another *Seven Samurai*. It doesn't matter where the story comes from: he is doing what every film-maker has always done, which is to construct a film out of an idea and get the appropriate dialogue to go with it. It doesn't tackle the problem of how you make a film of Shakespeare which is a movie and yet uses the fact that you've got a text which is continually changing gear.

* * *

The interesting thing is this: the Elizabethan theatre had a complicated yet marvellously free technique of blank verse at its most sophisticated. Shakespeare could conjure up images such that, if you could chop open the head of anybody watching his play and pull out the impression from the brain matter, you'd get something more like a Rauchenberg, more like a piece of pop art, than anything else. Because the effect on the mind in the course of any one of the vivid lines of Shakespeare is that you would most likely have one word written in letters across the mind, and three overlapping pictures. You would see the actor as a man standing in the distance, and you would also see his face, right on top of you—perhaps his profile and the back of his head as well. And you would also see the background, the fact that he's standing in front of a beautiful forest, or a great dawn, or something. You would see this, but not complete. Because when Hamlet is doing any one of his soliloquies (to take the crudest example) the background that Shakespeare can conjure in one line evaporates completely and other images take its place. I think that the freedom of the Elizabethan theatre is still only very partially understood. People have talked their heads off about the non-localised stage. The non-localised stage obviously means that you can change background. What people don't fully face is that it also means every single thing under the sun is possible: a man can turn into twins, change sex, be his past, his present, his future, be a comic version of himself and a tragic version of himself, and be none of them, *all at the same time*.

Kott's great essay on Gloucester's suicide is marvellous from that point of view. He points out that the suicide only means something if he does it on a bare stage without a rock to jump from, because then it becomes the whole of Pirandello and the whole of Ionesco and the whole of Beckett. It is a man doing a meaningless jump, and an actor doing a jump, at one and the same time. This is where you come right up against the problem that, if we say the best Shakespeare on film so far is the Kozintsev, we still don't have a style which can enable us to demonstrate all these complexities simultaneously. Kozintsev has done something to cope with the epic realism of *Hamlet*, but I was talking to him in Paris about the idea of filming *Lear*. If you take the scene of Gloucester's suicide you are forced, in the theatre, to make Gloucester do it on a windy

heath of some description. Fifty per cent of the extraordinariness is that it is happening on an imaginary heath and yet on the boards of the theatre. There's a meaning there that is released by that double tension which isn't there if you take either aspect on its own. If it's just a leap on a bare stage, it hasn't the meaning; and if it is really a man on a heath doing a leap it also hasn't; but in Shakespeare, without any effort at all, you get both. It's like an idea itself striking you.

The problem in filming Shakespeare is, how can you change gears, fluctuate between gears, styles and conventions as lightly and as deftly as the mental processes inside a person, which can be reflected by blank verse but not by the consistency of each single image? It is the same problem that every film-maker has to face in relation to all filming now, thirty-five years after the invention of sound. Sound stopped the cinema right in its tracks. People thought at the time that it took away the mobility of the camera. Well, very rapidly they found a way back to the full mobility of the camera, but the mobility of *thought*, which the silent cinema had, is only just being recaptured in the cinema of Godard. This is why in experiment, if not in actual subject matter, Godard is the most important director. In *Bande à Part*, for the first time, he liberates the picture from its own consistency, so that at one second you are genuinely looking at a photograph of three people in a bar, then you are half alienated, then three-quarters alienated, then you are looking at it as a film, then as something made by a film-maker, then you are reminded that it is made by actors, and then you are thrown right back into believing it. This is the changing relationship that you have in Shakespeare.

* * *

In a way, however, this is in its infancy. Godard at one extreme, and Antonioni at the other, are both tackling the same problem: that the information thrown up by photographic naturalism is insufficient, that to have a man sitting in front of a camera while it objectively records him is not to capture an objective reality. People have been lost in this particular cul-de-sac for a number of years, forced to think that it has its realism. Gradually they are coming to realise what film is: an event at the time of projection, so that the only reality is the moment of projection where an image is thrown on the screen. The reality of six weeks before of a man sitting in a room doesn't cut any ice, therefore it isn't real, therefore what is the virtue of the so-called 'naturalism' of the photographic process? It would be real if it gave you the totality of information of that one man sitting in that spot; but of course it doesn't begin to do that.

We did a very interesting exercise in the studio at Stratford. I got one of the actors to sit in front of the group and think up an elaborate situation for himself; then I asked him to live as an actor all he could of the inner conditions of this situation. The group were to find out what was going on without questioning him. All this was purely to drive home in a dramatic way the fact that external realities are completely non-narrative—like, in *Bande à Part*, the marvellous close-up of the man in the train giving the different readings of the face. What we found was an actor who in his own mind was going through—oh, I forget, waiting for his girl-friend to go and see a doctor to discover if she was pregnant, because if so she would have to have an abortion and where was he going to get the money, and would she tell his wife, and all that—while the group naturally had all kinds of way out interpretations. Without means at his disposal, the actor couldn't communicate anything of his scenario, and the group couldn't reach it. It was a very primitive but good exercise, because gradually the frustration built. They couldn't reach him and he couldn't reach them.

It's this dissatisfaction that leads both Antonioni and Godard to their very different ways of working. Antonioni *accepts* the stability of the shot, and then tries by all manner of other devices to capture the invisible; Godard *attacks* the stability of the shot, and tries to get all the aspects by going

round and round. What both of them are reacting from is a sense that the frame, by itself or in juxtaposition, carries the meaning—that a single frame is a full unit. It is the classic Eisenstein theory of cutting that is really false: the belief that what you are juxtaposing are units in themselves, which stand up, or potentially stand up, on their own. The whole of *Moderato Cantabile* was an elaborate exercise to see whether it is possible, in a medium that has always been considered to have an essentially documentary flavour, to photograph an almost invisible but tangible reality. Whether it is possible to get under the surface photographically.

You see, I'm greedy. In the theatre and cinema, more than in any other medium, I want all possible pieces of information about something, and the search for form is really that search. The self-imposed consistency of any stylistic decision at once acts as a barrier which precludes one knowing something which one wants to know. If you have a purely intimate story about two people, then one wants to know the social reference; if it's an epic subject, one wants to know something of the inner life; and it's only in Shakespeare that you really find a proper balance where nothing is sacrificed, nothing is made less.

* * *

When you consider a major achievement of writing such as a play by Shakespeare, you are continually reinterpreting it. This object is there and it's like a sputnik, it turns round, and over the years different portions of it are nearer to you, different bits are further away. It's rushing past and you are peeling off these meanings. In that way a text is dynamic. The whole question of what Shakespeare intended doesn't arise, because what he has written not only carries more meanings than he consciously intended, but those meanings are altering in a mysterious way as the text moves through the centuries. If you dig into it you may find some new aspect, and yet you never seize the thing itself. Beckett is also a clear example of this. Notice how consistently he is criticised, and yet how serenely his plays go on. The mud is slung and it doesn't stick. The entire press said *Endgame* was boring, negative, useless, the end of theatre: but then you get *Happy Days*. The plays go on: they stand there, withholding analysis and interpretation, until you come back to the fact that they are

ANASTASIA VERTINSKA AND INNOKENTI SMOKTUNOVSKY IN KOZINTSEV'S "HAMLET".





PAUL SCOFIELD AS LEAR. A SCENE FROM PETER BROOK'S PRODUCTION FOR THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE.

proper objects. They are what their simplest definition is: just a woman in a hole, two men talking—and yet they aren't.

The first problem with Shakespeare's technique in the cinema is that you can't get away from certain basic requirements, any more than you can in the theatre. You cannot do Shakespeare on a ten foot stage with twenty people as well as you can given certain material conditions. Stratford's *The Wars of the Roses* couldn't have been done as well without those sixty people and that size of stage. The Godard cinema isn't the complete answer: it is leading the search for a new style, but I don't think it's the right style for Shakespeare because it depends on a kind of light scale cinema. But I have seen another technique which it is possible to shape to Shakespeare.

A man called Francis Thompson has made a lyrical documentary for Johnson's Wax, which was the sensation of the New York World's Fair. This is a fifteen-minute film using the old Abel Gance technique of three screens. And the result is extraordinary. The three screens put side by side make something as large as a Cinerama screen. It is basically the same principle, but Cinerama pretends that the joins don't exist, that if the three screens don't quite register this is a mistake you should have the good manners to overlook. You are meant to pretend that you are looking through a vast window on the world. Thompson's is a more Brechtian technique: never for one moment are you asked to forget the fact that you are looking at three separate screens, three frames with a gap between them. If you sit in an old-fashioned theatre behind the pillars, you're not surprised if someone goes behind one and then reappears on the other side. It's exactly the same here. They have enormous canoeing scenes, and the canoes shoot across the picture, passing across the breaks from one screen to the next. But the fact that those breaks are there as continual reminders means that as soon

as the director no longer needs a full Cinerama scale and wants to reduce it, he can cut to something quite different.

In classic film-making, there is no problem for the audience in cutting from a long shot to a close-up. Here, if you want to go from three shots showing the same thing to three showing different things, it makes no greater imaginative demands on the audience. This is what is so interesting: the film was a terrific hit in New York, the thing that people fought to get into, and it is just a little documentary about boys growing up in different parts of the world. The three screens are showing, say, traffic in America, a wedding in Italy, and a landscape in Africa; you cut, and it splinters so that all three screens show different views of the same thing; next cut all three are identical close-ups, say, top shots; next cut one remains on the top shot and the other two show different views of it.

Now every possible permutation is open to you. For the first time a device exists which does break the inner consistency of each frame. You can have Hamlet and the battlements of Elsinore, he can be on the right hand screen, while the other two show a rampart and the sea. Or, to go back to Gloucester, you can show the heath, and the moment a soliloquy begins, nothing prevents you from dropping the heath out of your picture to concentrate on different views, above and below, of Gloucester himself. If you like you can throw one of your screens over to a caption, a subtitle. The realistic action could be in colour, the other in black-and-white, with a caption on the third screen. You could have statistics, or a cartoon parodying the photographic action. This is a very elaborate device, which goes right back to Abel Gance. I think these multiple screens are the real opening, because the technique has exactly the same possibilities, in a different way, as the Brechtian stage. It is obviously going to come, and I believe that, gradually, this is the way that a style for filming Shakespeare can be found.

Brook, Parenthetically . . .

When I was at Oxford I wrote an article on spec for what was then *SIGHT AND SOUND*, arguing that the only logical development for the cinema was towards a wide screen. I think I called it something like the Long Screen—I've never understood why. Anyway, I wrote this long piece saying that it seemed clear to me that the identification which came from the angle of vision of the little screen and the eye being the same, made for a subjective cinema which had come to the end of its line, and now had to give way to something that could be looked at objectively. To look at something objectively the eye must be free, because if the spectator once moves his head from right to left he is then back in his seat, while if he is glued to the little hole, he never moves his head and the camera cuts or pans for him.

My argument was based on the fact that the development of colour made this an inevitable historical thing, because the moment you had your first colour shots you had two points of interest, and so the eye travelled. The moment the eye travelled it would want to travel further, and therefore a wide screen was absolutely inevitable, and with the wide screen would come a new possibility of doing Shakespeare, ballet and opera. I sent this article in, and got a letter back from the man who ran the magazine saying . . . this is too fanciful, I can't print this because the theory you develop is too fanciful, I am returning it with regret, etc.

This interview is published by permission of the "Tulane Drama Review".



LOVE

TOM MILNE

in three dimensions

RENOIR IS THE MOST UNRUFFLED of directors. As with Ozu, though in a very different way, the rich dynamism of films like *Le Carrosse d'Or* and *Le Caporal Epinglé* is effortless and invisible. They are beautiful, but there is no sense of formal composition; they are full of movement, yet the camera, almost invariably upright, moves only when it must; they are extremely complex, yet seem to be built up at random. It is this deceptive simplicity which, even now that Renoir is generally recognised as one of the cinema's truly great, still casts an aura of the untutored genius about his name. But *La Règle du Jeu*, rugged and amorphous as it may look, quite obviously did not just happen. It was the result of a style patiently developed from *La Chienne*, through *La Nuit du Carrefour* and *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, and seen at its most deliberately formal in *Madame Bovary*, a film still more or less ignored by the histories; and to think of Renoir as anything less than a superb craftsman is as meaningless as to say that any child could paint as well as Picasso.

For Renoir could deploy technique with the best of them. One has only to recall the daringly simple vertical lift of the camera which discovers the murder of Lulu in *La Chienne*; or in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, the camera which watches from the courtyard as Lange leaves his office and descends the stairs, then suddenly turns its back on him to watch Batala instead, superbly confident that Lange must quickly reappear in frame to kill him; or the brilliantly witty montage in *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, involving a painting on the wall, a passing brass band, and neighbours shouting their congratulations, which announces Boudu's triumphant seduction of his benefactor's wife. But as time went on and his vision grew richer, Renoir found less and less need of bravura:

"The pursuing 'hunter' which was one side of his nature did not slacken, indeed was destined never to disappear. Until the day of his death Renoir remained 'on the watch for the motif.' But now the game allowed him to approach with less fear, having discovered that

the hunter's buckshot was love continually renewed."

(Jean Renoir, *Renoir, My Father*)

His attitude to his characters remained unchanged, but where once he had to *reveal* them in depth, he now *saw* them in depth. In Renoir, style and the man became indistinguishable.

* * *

The essence of Renoir is his three-dimensional view of things, hinted at as early as *La Chienne* in the puppet prologue which announces that what follows is neither tragedy nor comedy, but simply a story of ordinary people "comme vous, comme moi." "Everybody has his reasons," mutters Octave-Renoir in *La Règle du Jeu*, and Renoir's characters are always viewed both objectively and subjectively so as to give them every chance. "Put yourself in my place, Monsieur le Juge . . ." begins Dédé, the rapacious pimp of *La Chienne*, before realising that the examining magistrate is hardly likely to want to do so; but we, the audience, have in the meantime glimpsed his point of view, we have seen that he has his reasons. For Renoir, understanding is more important than approbation or condemnation, and the tiniest of details may be of vital importance. When Legrand murders Lulu in *La Chienne*, for example, it is ostensibly her mocking laughter when he tries to persuade her to come back to him that drives him to it. But as viewed by Renoir, there is something else: some trick of light from the window, falling on Lulu's hair as she lies in bed with the white fur of her peignoir framing her face, and making her more radiantly desirable than ever before. To Legrand's fury at her deception and cruel mockery, is added an extraordinary poignancy of loss, which makes the murder something more than a simple *crime passionnel* of revenge.

True to his heritage as the son of the painter Auguste, the quality of light and the feel and touch of things were all-important to Renoir, and for this reason (against the whole trend of the period) he almost invariably insisted on shooting in real surroundings rather than amid the artificiality of studio sets. The character had to be seen in his milieu, as part of his surroundings, if his reactions were to be accurately seized and understood. As Bazin pointed out, for instance, the feeling of joyous liberation in the final sequence of *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, when Boudu escapes from marriage by throwing himself out of the boat, depends almost entirely on the almost tangible feeling of a summer afternoon by the river.

Nana, made in 1926 and considered by Renoir to be his first real film, reveals very little awareness of these later preoccupations. Conceived under the influence of Stroheim, this story of the rise of a small-time actress who becomes the pampered mistress of an elderly count, drives all her lovers to despair, and finally dies alone, horribly disfigured by smallpox, is unquestionably Renoir's, in that the characters are treated with genuine sympathy and understanding. But, penetratingly stylish as the film is, Renoir had not yet learned how to integrate characters and milieu, and the elaborate studio sets tend to make plot points rather than illuminate the action. Revealingly enough, much of the action is filmed in medium or close shot, and Renoir has to resort to a series of tracking shots to reveal the full sumptuousness of the settings in which his characters live.

Gradually, however, he began to evolve a style which would permit complete integration of characters and milieu. In *Le Tournoi*, for instance (a commercial chore which Renoir has said interested him mainly for reasons of technique), one finds the first attempt at that depth of focus which was later to become so characteristic: two people arguing are overheard by a third, and the scene is shot through a deep archway with the characters standing on either side of it. The great jousting sequence, too, shot with what appears to be a hand-held camera, gives an extraordinary feeling of on-the-spot actuality. In *La Chienne*, the film opens with a shot of the office banquet seen through the open hatch of a dumb-waiter; as Legrand shaves in his room, a little girl plays at the window of the apartment across the courtyard, or practises her scales at the

piano in yet another room; when Legrand enters Lulu's room to discover Dédé in bed with her, the camera immediately cuts to a shot of the scene from outside the window. In *La Nuit du Carrefour*, as Inspector Maigret proceeds with his investigations, scenes are constantly being shot past him or over his shoulder, as if to focus concentration on the mysterious person or object he is contemplating, and which is seen rather hazily in the background.

In all these films Renoir was intermittently attempting to create a three-dimensional effect on the screen, to suggest that people exist *in* a milieu rather than against a setting. With *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, he took a step forward by capturing and contrasting two different milieux to create the impression that his anarchistic tramp was a wild faun trapped in the strange, closed world of rooms, corridors, furniture and courtyards: on the one hand, the shut-in feeling of the bookseller's shop (with the action tracked from room to room, or bounded by other apartments seen through the windows), and on the other, the brilliantly sensuous evocation of the summery Paris exteriors in which Boudu wanders at liberty. In both cases it is the three-dimensional effect which counts—the feeling that one can smell the grass or touch the leaves on the trees, and the feeling that one knows the exact geography of the Lestingois apartment and all its contents. And in 1934, with *Madame Bovary*, one of Renoir's least known films recently revived twice by the National Film Theatre, he perfected this technique.

* * *

As originally planned and shot, *Madame Bovary* was to run for just over three hours. As it stands, shorn of one third of its length by timorous distributors, it is a remarkable tribute to the way Renoir *encompasses* Flaubert's description of the Normandy countryside and Emma's boredom and despair. There are obvious gaps, of course: Léon turns up at the Rouen Opera House to make his declaration of undying love for Emma after having been seen only once previously, during a very brief scene. Justin, the pharmacist's youthful assistant who adores Emma from a distance with a dog-like devotion, has only been glimpsed once before when Emma makes use of his infatuation to persuade him to give her the key of the poison cupboard. Nevertheless, the whole feeling and meaning of the novel is intact. And Renoir's power of evocation is such that one can almost fill in the gaps oneself.

We first see Léon, for instance, when he stops the Bovary carriage to ask Emma if she wants to renew her subscription to a musical journal: nothing else is said, but his whole attitude as he gazes up at her, the two of them metaphorically isolated by the mournful stretch of dusty road, is unmistakably one of adoration faced by interest. Similarly with Justin, whom we first see hanging about hopefully outside Emma's door while a messenger takes in a basket of peaches from her lover: the whole scene of her agitated discovery of the letter hidden among the peaches is shot from Justin's point of view, and one senses the boy's excitement and perturbation. The difficulty with this mutilated version, of course, is that, at least on a first viewing, one may fail to make the connections: one may not realise that the Léon of the Opera House is the same as the young man on the road, or that the boy who enables Emma to poison herself is the one who hung about hopefully outside her room. To that one can only retort that *Madame Bovary* is a film worth seeing over and over again, and hope that someone, some day, will disinter the original negative.

"*Madame Bovary, c'est moi*," Flaubert wrote. Even more, however, she stands for the eternally irreconcilable beauty and boredom of the provinces, and there is a constant tension throughout the film between the reality of her surroundings and the fantasy she tries to make of them. The opening sequence sets the tone admirably. After an idyllic beginning—a summer afternoon, a thatched farmhouse, pigs and cows grazing under the fruit trees in the orchard, servants hanging washing out in the sun—Renoir cuts to the dark interior of the



"MADAME BOVARY": THE SHOT FROM INSIDE THE BLACKSMITH'S FORGE.

sitting-room where Emma entertains Charles Bovary, pointing out a portrait of Mary Stuart hanging on the wall, showing him the treasured keepsake of her schooldays, and talking wistfully of life in the romantic past. The connections are made quickly and easily: Emma sees the stolid Charles as her rescuer, a knight on a white charger who will carry her away to a life of romance, and Renoir cuts instantly to a shot of Charles plodding prosaically away on his horse through the dusty country roads and into the village: as he arrives in the village square and is greeted by Homais the pharmacist, Renoir shoots the scene from inside the pharmacist's shop, past Homais, to Charles firmly planted on horseback in the middle of the square; a further shot from inside the blacksmith's forge, in which Charles can be seen through the window still sitting in the square, completes the anchorage. Charles is rooted in the reality of this village and its life, and a beautiful linking shot shows Emma tranquilly supervising the feeding of pigs and chickens as she goes about the business of her father's farm.

Set against this reality is the pathetic fantasy of Emma's dream world. The dichotomy between the beauty of the countryside and the bleak desert which Emma's boredom makes of it is beautifully conveyed in a single sequence—the second carriage ride. Soon after their marriage, Charles has given Emma a carriage of her own; and their first outing is a joyous affair, prancing proudly through the village, meeting Léon on the road, and ending with Emma happily submitting to Charles' kisses. Subsequently, Emma's boredom settles in,

she quarrels bitterly with Charles' mother about household extravagance, and the second outing in the carriage is a very different affair, with the atmosphere gloomy and Emma complaining about the approaching rain. A chance meeting on the road, however, results in an invitation to a ball at the Marquis d'Andervilliers' château, and although the atmosphere grows physically dark with rain, to the joyful Emma it lightens: she smiles radiantly, and refuses to have the carriage hood put up.

Renoir stresses this same dichotomy in the two scenes in which Emma achieves real happiness: the d'Andervilliers ball, and the visit to the opera at Rouen. Viewed objectively, the opera (an extract from *Lucie de Lammermoor* performed in the style of 1840) is a pathetically pedestrian and provincial affair with tatty costumes and scenery, indifferent orchestral accompaniment, and singers lined up in stolid rows facing the audience instead of each other. Yet Emma is breathless with enchantment at the romance of it all. And at the ball, she is delighted to be asked to waltz by an elderly roué, thrilled when the lady of the house condescendingly pats her cheek in passing. It is a sharp comment on how far Emma has retreated into fantasy when her unprepossessing partner at the ball, observing Charles unhappily wandering about trying not to get in everybody's way, comments on his clumsiness, and she denies any knowledge of her own husband.

Throughout the film, Renoir gives firm substance to this contrast between reality and fantasy. Because of her impossible romantic demands, Emma's love affairs are doomed to failure: taking place as they do on the margins of the context of reality



EMMA AND RODOLPHE IN THE FOREST.

in which she lives, their only permanence is in her mind. When she meets her first lover, Rodolphe, for instance, it is against the background of preparations for the local agricultural show, *Les Comices*. While Homais and her husband take their places on the platform, the mayor makes his speech, the villagers mill about, a brass band plays, prize horses and cows are paraded, judges examine their teeth and fetlocks, an old servant walks up amid loud cheers to receive a medal for fifty-four years of faithful service—while all this is going on, Rodolphe and Emma sit indoors and talk obliquely of romance. But the “romance” turns out to be a sordid, transient affair of meetings in a forest and snatched visits to Rodolphe’s home, ending as soon as Emma attempts to pull it

into reality by asking Rodolphe to elope with her. Her next passionate affair, with Léon, takes place in a dingy hotel room in Rouen, while outside an old tramp wanders past singing of love, of youthful dreams, and of how life goes on. But in that hotel room, life has stopped.

For Emma, like Charles, is rooted in the soil of Normandy, and she is always, almost mystically, drawn back to it. The beautiful, verdant world she has ignored—the sunlit forest in which she first succumbs to Rodolphe’s advances, the flashing millstream she runs past on her way to Rodolphe’s house for consolation after her husband’s disgrace over the affair of Hippolyte’s club-foot—later seem to claim her back as their own. Her final flight from Rodolphe, for instance, trailing her cloak behind her through the trees, ends with a remarkable shot of her sinking slowly to the grass, as if it were cradling her despair. The sequence in which she persuades Justin to give her the poison follows immediately after this, and the film ends with her long, agonising death, in which her face recedes further and further into a darkness of pain, as if she were sinking back into the earth.

* * *

It is in this film, even more than *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, that one becomes aware of Renoir’s uncanny ability to give objects an almost animate existence. Sunlight, trees, grass, dusty roads, carriages, animals—all stand out in sharp relief, irradiating the action with their presence. When making *Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier* years later, Renoir complained of the modern habit of post-synchronising everything, resulting in a pure but flat and uninteresting soundtrack: not only unwanted noises are eliminated, but necessary ones as well. *Madame Bovary*’s soundtrack is a model in this respect. The scene in which Emma and Rodolphe dismount in a clearing during their ride through the forest, for instance, is so rich visually, aurally, and even tactually, that it makes one realise with a jolt how thin by comparison are all those scenes in other films where the heroine is seduced in a wood.

Here, Rodolphe and Emma stand in the foreground, talking beside their horses while he persuades her to let him kiss her. One’s attention is firmly fixed on the couple and their conversation, but what one is really aware of is the feeling of the scene, the acute sensations of warmth and quiet and isolation: the sun shimmering on the leaves and dappling the horses’ flanks; the crackle of leaves underfoot; the chattering of birds; the clink of bridles as the horses move restlessly; the rustle of a branch as one of the horses nibbles idly at a leaf. Here Renoir clothes a scene with living flesh, just as he does in the oddly pleasurable little sequence when the Marquis d’Andervilliers stops his carriage to speak to the Bovarys, and where the horse’s refusal to halt completely, dragging forward so that the Marquis has to shout the rest of his invitation over his shoulder, adds a completely fresh dimension of unexpectedness to the scene.

It was also in this film that Renoir seems to have fully realised the power of a firmly anchored, almost stationary camera. Over and over again, without loss of movement but with immeasurable gain in depth, he shoots a sequence from a fixed standpoint, waiting for an action to resolve itself round the camera. In the scene where Charles tells Emma he has bought her a carriage, for instance, he calls her over to the window to see it, and as she rushes excitedly across, the camera peers over their shoulders at the carriage parked on the other side of the street; first Emma, then Charles, disappears out of frame, to reappear a moment or two later running toward the carriage; only when they have clambered in, does the camera shift its viewpoint to a close-up. Time and time again the camera waits patiently in this way while characters move in and out of frame, or from room to room, creating an extraordinarily powerful feeling of depth, a feeling that scenes are developing not only in front of the camera but all around it.



EMMA AND LEON AT THE HOTEL IN ROUEN.

The most remarkable example is the quarrel scene between Emma and Charles' mother, which takes place in the living-room. As the mother walks out in a huff to the hall, followed by Emma, the camera takes up its position at a vantage point just inside the living-room door from which it can watch the hall. A door opens at the end of the hall to reveal Charles, disturbed while working in his study; he comes into the hall to mediate between the two women; the mother marches angrily upstairs, out of sight; Charles calls after her, then goes to Emma to beg her to apologise; she agrees, and he disappears up the stairs; he returns, followed after a moment by his mother; she and Emma unwillingly shake hands; Emma moves towards the living-room door, hesitates, walks carefully round the old woman, and goes upstairs. The camera then cuts to show Emma going into her room and slamming the door (an ironically exact repetition, incidentally, of the camera set-up when Charles first showed Emma her bridal-chamber after their marriage).

This sense that the life of the characters is continuous, going on whether the camera is present or not, is perfectly illustrated by the scene in which the basket of peaches, which had accompanied Rodolphe's note announcing his departure, appears on the Bovary dinner-table. Charles eagerly tastes a peach and solicitously chooses a ripe one for Emma, unaware of their dire associations, while she, overcome by distress, rises from the table just in time to see Rodolphe's carriage pass the window. The fortuitously melodramatic element in the scene—the departing lover passing just at the moment when Emma is in a position to see him—would have defeated almost any other director. But Renoir, having carefully laid his emphasis on the life which goes on outside, gets away with it. Rodolphe is leaving, sooner or later his carriage must pass the window, and we, like Emma, are almost waiting for the rumble of approaching wheels.

Almost every sequence in the film, too—long before Welles and Wyler—makes systematic and brilliant use of deep focus. Sometimes it is used casually, simply to add to the three-dimensional tone of the film, as in the scene at the Opera House when the camera watches from the back of the stalls while Léon clambers out of his seat, the usherette telegraphs directions, members of the audience look round angrily, and in the background the opera singers carry on unconcernedly. Elsewhere it is used to striking dramatic effect, as in the scene where Emma waits in her room, while Charles and her father go outside so that Charles can work up his courage to ask her hand in marriage. Cutting back to Emma in her room, the camera watches with her as she peers anxiously out of the window; in the middle distance we can see her father walking towards the house, and far away in the background, Charles waiting anxiously for the sign which will mean that Emma has accepted him.

Madame Bovary is a singularly beautiful film, and it illustrates Renoir's belief that pictorial values are not a matter of composition à la Eisenstein, but of making the audience sharply aware of the special quality of each individual element in a scene. Although *Madame Bovary* is, in fact, deliberately composed in the sense that its characters are viewed carefully and precisely in their milieu, what gives it its special power, as Bazin remarked of Renoir in general, is "la qualité de son regard"—his unerring instinct for light, shade and textures. This, together with his careful juxtapositions and systematic use of composition in depth, is basically the technique which underlies all Renoir's later works, and which, with the rough edges smoothed away by familiarity, permit his warmly loving, complete view of humanity. The Normandy countryside is laid before us with unparalleled precision, and in a context of such richness it would be almost impossible for the characters not to come alive, even if Valentine Tessier (Emma) and Pierre Renoir (Charles) were as miscast as all the historians claim. Pierre Renoir, in fact, is almost perfect as the bovine Charles, fumbling with a tenderness which can never find expression at

the right moment, continually being led out of his depth and worriedly uncertain as to how to get back. The case for Valentine Tessier, however, is less clear-cut. The trouble with Emma is that she is a tiresome creature, as tiresome as those frantically romantic heroines of Jane Austen's early novels; and Valentine Tessier plays her as tiresome—imagining her casual affair with the lady-killing Rodolphe to be a grand passion, visiting the pragmatic priest to complain of some spiritual wasting disease, making an ostentatious show of throwing herself out of a window when she receives Rodolphe's letter of dismissal. It may be that Valentine Tessier is the victim of the chronic acting problem of playing a bore without being boring (or, in this case, portraying a melodramatic woman without laying herself open to accusations of over-acting). But at least it is a brave and conscious attempt to present Emma as she in all probability really was, as is shown by her subtle progression from the simplicity of the opening scenes, through the period of romantic exaggeration, to the end in dark despair. Certainly Tessier's magnificently heartfelt and angry final denunciation of Rodolphe's indifference ("Moi, je vous aurais tout donné"), and her grimly realistic acting in the death scene, could hardly be bettered.

As always with Renoir, all his characters receive their share of his understanding and tenderness. Particularly revealing in this respect is his treatment of the priest whom Emma visits in search of consolation. Hopelessly earthbound, the priest hasn't the least idea what she is talking about, and puts it all down to the hot weather or an upset stomach. Yet, although he may have no cure for souls, he has a cure for bodies, as Renoir indicates through the priest's tactful control of the small boys who play and fight around him as he talks to Emma. Here, suddenly, one realises that, after all, the other minor characters in the film—Léon, Justin and Homais in particular—have been robbed of a dimension. One can only speculate wistfully as to the masterpiece which will emerge if ever the missing scenes are restored, as they were with *La Règle du Jeu*. In the meantime, the shortened version remains a remarkable achievement; and it is, after all, as legible a blueprint of a great director's working methods, before they became so much second nature as to be imperceptible, as we are likely to see.

EMMA SWALLOWS THE ARSENIC.





The Triple Split

AS PART OF HER ATTEMPTS to "reintegrate herself with reality," Giuliana, heroine of *The Red Desert*, has decided to open a small shop. When a friend drops by, he finds her trying out various samples of paint for the walls and ceiling. Giuliana has nearly decided on a light green—it will be less distracting. Distracting, echoes Corrado? Yes, from what I'm selling, the things . . . There is a pause, and suddenly Giuliana wheels on Corrado: What do you think I should sell?

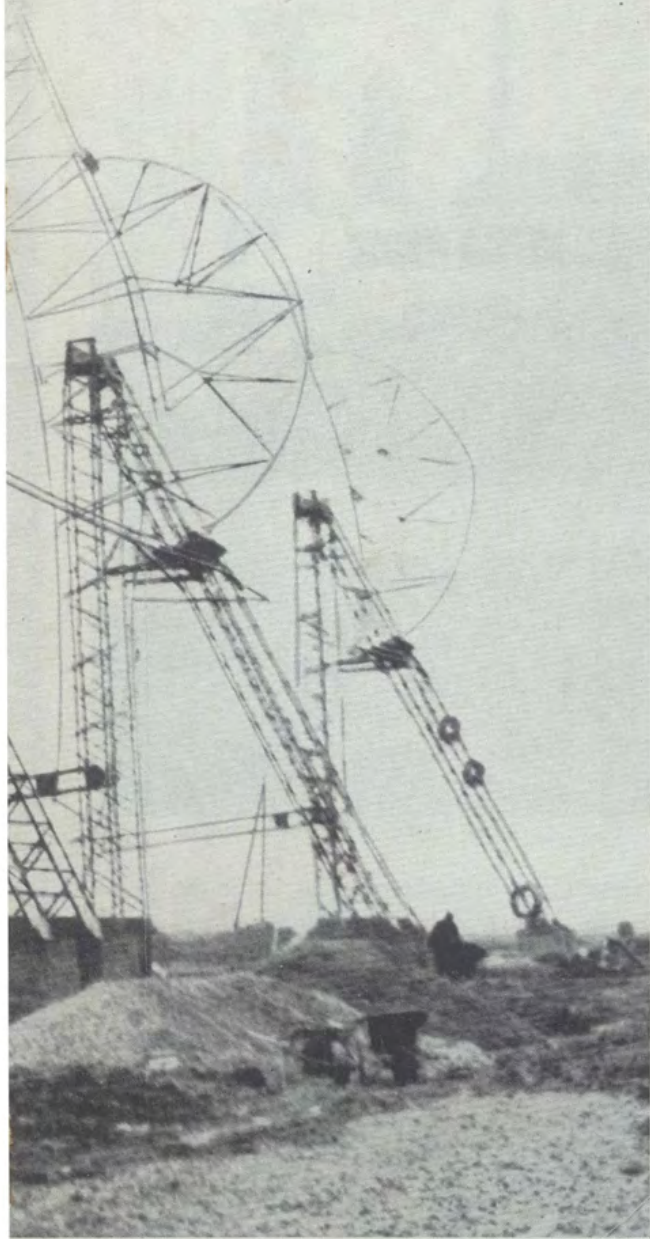
Antonioni may not have intended this scene as a reference to the vexed problem of form and content, but the image of Giuliana carefully decorating a shop before she knows what—if anything—she is going to sell in it, underlines very early in the film that rift in *The Red Desert* between what it is about, and what it is. Actually, there is a three-way split between

what Antonioni says his film is about, what it is about, and most important of all, what it is as film.

As film, it is a remarkable achievement. All the more reason, then, for a close examination of why—as a statement—it is something less than satisfactory. Antonioni has proclaimed that this film is a new departure for him, that everything he has done so far no longer interests him. And yet there are enough elements of the past in *The Red Desert* partially to belie this claim, enough of the past to undermine it.

The Undistributed Middle

MAY, 1960: LA NAPOULE. At a press conference the day before the presentation of *L'Avventura* at the Cannes Festival, Antonioni read the now famous statement: "There is today a very serious split between science on the one hand—com-



pletely projected towards the future and ready each day to repudiate its past if by so doing it can conquer even the smallest fraction of its future—and, on the other hand, a static, rigid morality, to which Man, fully aware of its obsolescence, nevertheless continues to cling." Antonioni then proceeds to deplore the contrast between man's conformism to his moral heritage and his willingness, in the scientific domain, to try any likely hypothesis. He offers no solution to the problem, saying only that *L'Avventura* is neither sermon nor denunciation: simply a statement of the problem. He concludes, however, with a query. Why is it that, knowing the old Tables of the Law no longer offer us anything more than an all too chewed-over message, we none the less remain faithful to them? Why is the man who is not afraid of the scientific unknown still afraid of the moral unknown?

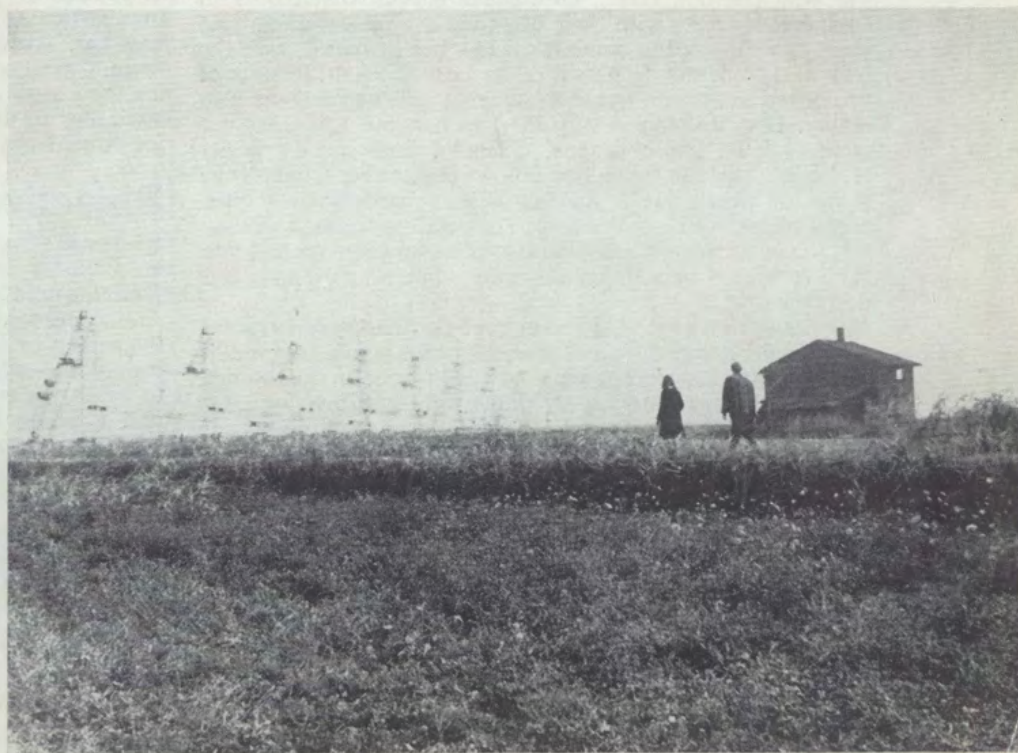
At the time, there seemed little reason to ponder deeply on this statement, partly because it appeared irrelevant to *L'Avventura*, and partly because one discounts general philosophical pronouncements from film directors. But now, in *The Red Desert*, Antonioni seems finally to have attempted a dramatisation of this statement. So perhaps it is time we took it seriously, especially as Antonioni declared, in a recent interview in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, that only by adapting ourselves to the new techniques of life can we find a solution to our moral problems.

Taking Antonioni's La Napoule statement seriously, then, we can see immediately that it betrays a certain degree of confusion. It implies that while science has made enormous progress in the last hundred years, morality has remained where it was in 1860. This, I believe, is untrue—at least in England and America. So manifestly untrue is it that there is little need to offer proof: one has only to read the newspapers and keep one's eyes open. In any case, Antonioni assumes that it is possible to make a valid comparison between science and morality. This seems to me as untenable as his statement that, in *La Notte*, he was trying to show that his characters did not live up to the beauty of the modern architecture in which they lived. But architecture, like any art, is an idealisation, a concentration, an incarnation of life: one cannot "live up" to the Pirelli building any more than the Greeks "lived up" to the Parthenon or the twelfth century French to Chartres.

One does not want to maintain that "human nature never changes." It does. But it changes much more slowly than science and for different reasons. Surely the difference between science and morality is that science is . . . scientific: i.e., it

GIULIANA AND CORRADO: THE RADIO MASTS AT MEDICINA,

THE RED DESERT





FINAL SEQUENCE OF THE FILM: GIULIANA AND HER SON.

deals with matters that can be empirically measured or ascertained. But how could one prove that monogamy is inferior to polygamy?

Travellers on the Red Desert

GIULIANA (MONICA VITTI): Giuliana is happily married to an engineer; together with their boy they live in Ravenna. Two years ago she tried to commit suicide, but managed, with the help of the doctors, to pass it off as a car accident. In spite of prolonged treatment, she still has great difficulty adjusting to reality. Her husband is very kind to her, but this does not seem to help. His colleague, Corrado, finds her extremely attractive; perhaps he will be able to protect her from all the things of which she is afraid. After a particularly violent crisis, she goes to him for help. They end up in bed together, but the experience is inconclusive. Somehow she manages to achieve a kind of stability thereafter, but for how long, we do not know.

UGO (CARLO DE PRA): Ugo is an engineer, happy in his work and happily married. After the shock of his wife's automobile accident (which occurred while he was in London; he did not, however, return) he found her rather difficult to live with. On the other hand, he gets much pleasure from teaching his son the rudiments of science. Were it not for Giuliana's neuroses, he would be very happy indeed. The only cloud is the inordinate interest she seems to be showing in his colleague, Corrado Zeller. But Zeller is off to South America soon.

CORRADO (RICHARD HARRIS): Corrado came to Ravenna to recruit workmen for the factory he is going to run in Patagonia.

The task takes him much longer than he expected, but in the meanwhile he becomes very attracted to Giuliana. He is pleased that she seems to like him, too, but disturbed by her rather peculiar behaviour. When she finally tells him that she has tried to commit suicide, he begins to understand her a little better. She demands from him, however, more than he, or perhaps any man, can give. One night she goes to his hotel in a particularly disturbed state; they end up by going to bed together. The experience is not very satisfactory for either of them. Corrado feels that he must complete his arrangements for the expedition; at the same time he experiences a certain lassitude, an unwillingness to keep moving, as he has done for years, from one place to the next.

Objective Correlative?

TO JUDGE FROM THE REASONABLY objective statements I have invented for each of the three leading characters, *The Red Desert* would seem to be a film about a neurotic woman. And Antonioni admits in the *Cahiers* interview that it is not the milieu in which Giuliana lives that provokes her crisis: it only makes it explode. Her husband and her lover do seem to be happy enough, and reasonably well adjusted.¹ If Ugo and Corrado have come to terms with their world, and Giuliana and the other women have not, would not this seem to indicate that the moral of the film is really the same one that moralists have preached for centuries: the Devil finds

¹Antonioni denies this in part: he maintains that Corrado's meeting with Giuliana unhinges him; perhaps because of the inadequacy of Richard Harris in the role, this is never visible.

work for idle hands.² This is further borne out by Antonioni's personal statement that if he could not work, could not make films, life would not be worth living.

But this is not at all what Antonioni claims he is saying. Throughout the film, Giuliana's tangled neuroses are contrasted with the clean forms and austere beauty of industrial architecture. Further, her life is compared with the slag heaps, the rusted iron, the refuse: the waste products of industrial civilisation. We see her first in the waste land surrounding the factory, crouching grotesquely amidst the brush and the waste, against the belching yellow poisonous exhaust from the factory, devouring a half-eaten sandwich which she has just bought for 2,000 lire from an astonished workman.

Antonioni might reply that women are simply more sensitive, and react more strongly than men to the contagion that menaces us all. And it is true that the cry (*il grido*) which heralds the arrival of the plague ship is heard only by Giuliana and Linda: the men hear nothing. And yet, the ship arrives, flying its yellow flag.

The problem is not entirely philosophical, however. Perhaps Antonioni might have succeeded with another actress in rendering significant Giuliana's neuroses. But it must be said, with all respect, that Monica Vitti is inadequate for this purpose. From her first appearance, slouched inside her coat, her fingers jammed in her mouth, staring wildly from right to left, she looks more like a Monica Vitti character who has finally taken complete leave of her senses than the result of the split between science and morality.³ The problem remains: whether because of the way she is played, or because of the action of the film, Giuliana remains a pathological case. Therefore, when Antonioni assures us that, because Corrado sleeps with her when she comes to him for help, she is consequently the victim of her own outmoded world of sentiments, one can but demur. If she had gone to someone really well adapted like Ugo, Antonioni says, he would have tried to cure her rather than "profit" by her dismay. But as the character is played by Miss Vitti, any "treatment" other than the most basic would seem to be of little use.

But this remark of Antonioni's demands investigation, for it displays an unexpected attitude towards sexual relations. If he is against our outmoded morality, why then does he feel it so beastly of Corrado to have slept with Giuliana? And why does "Nothing Happen" in the so-called orgy scene? One hopes Antonioni is saying that the fact that nothing happens is another proof of how these people are prisoners of their morality. But the arrival of a worker (seen in a heroic low-angle shot from the point of view of the entangled mass of bourgeois limbs on the floor) may signify a condemnation of these wicked, if abortive, upper middle class goings on. The meaning of the scene remains vague, perhaps because of a confusion between Antonioni's old left-wing sympathies (corruption and decadence of the bourgeoisie) and his current view that it is the rising engineer class who—adjusted to science and technology—will inherit the earth. One could say that it is precisely this confusion which is the subject of the film, but it would have been more convincing had Antonioni seemed clearer in his own mind.

There are other examples of basic uncertainty in the film: the husband (admirably played by Carlo de Prà, a non-professional) is supposed to be the only character approaching Antonioni's ideal, and yet we are astonished to learn that he did not come back from London when Giuliana had her "accident." Corrado (and we) cannot help but find this

reprehensible. Is this because we are tied to the old morality, too? This seems hard to believe; if it is not true, then perhaps well-adjusted Ugo is *too* well-adjusted?

One could go on picking holes in the film's message, but as Antonioni admits, he is not a philosopher, and these considerations have little to do with what he calls the "invention" of his film. Not being a philosopher (or a scientist) has taken its toll, none the less. Antonioni has been a victim of that deductive reasoning abhorred by scientists: he has imposed an idea or a belief on his materials, rather than inducing one from them. This is a fault of which he was rarely guilty in his previous three films (except, perhaps, for the party scenes in *La Notte*). But the specific virtues of *The Red Desert* were largely absent from these films, too.

Figure or Carpet?

THESE VIRTUES ARE PURELY cinematographic, or, to put the fat in the fire, abstract. How can this be, you cry? We all know that films deal with human relationships, not spatial relationships. But do they? I defy anyone to deny that *The Red Desert* is a "great" film. And yet anyone could—as I have done—pick gaping holes in it as drama, as statement. Ergo: its virtues must be non-intellectual, and, in a measure, non-dramatic. The colour, one anxiously suggests? Yes, it is beautiful. But that's not it. At least, that's not all of it. To go back to the old argument, is it simply that a painting is, before being a battle scene or a nude, first of all an arrangement of lines and colours in a certain order? There is much in *The Red Desert* to justify this view.

This is not an entirely new departure for Antonioni: his early *Cronaca di un Amore* and *Signora senza Camelie* were distinguished by an autonomous and non-functional use of camera movements, a formal choreography which accompanied the film, providing a non-conceptual figure in the carpet, an experience in pure form. But about the time of *L'Avventura*, he seemed to abandon all this; declaring, in fact, that he had tired of what he called experiments in film syntax. None the less, in *La Notte* (particularly the great sequence of Lidia's walk) one found him experimenting again. Now, in *The Red Desert*, non-representation is well to the fore. Antonioni says that it was the use of colour which prompted a certain modification of his style. But it goes deeper than that: he has quite consciously foregone realism. For example, he says, he has made much use of a telephoto lens precisely in order to avoid that depth of focus so indispensable to realism. In fact (perhaps because of near-by Ravenna?) many shots have a Byzantine two-dimensionality, a lack of perspective which comes close to creating purely painterly effects.

Then, too, landscape and even people are treated as elements to be arranged and placed in a frame: people are inserted into landscape, inserted into frame; surging up from the bottom, sliding in from the side. The arrival of Corrado at Giuliana's

VEGETABLE STALL IN THE VIA ALIGHIERI, WHERE GIULIANA HAS HER SHOP.



²True, there is the worker at Medicina who was in Giuliana's clinic, but he remains a shadowy symbol, rather than a character, expressly put in to show that workers can be neurotic too. In any case, when we see him he is happily back at work, and only his wife displays neurotic tendencies.

³This is neither his nor her fault: it would seem that the only way he can get a film set up is with the commercial guarantee of the presence of Miss Vitti.

shop in the Via Alighieri begins with the irruption from the right of an abstract white form along the bottom of the frame: a second later we see that this is the roof of his car.

Because he has treated the film abstractly, or rather, concretely as film—something which is made up of frames arranged in a certain order—he has also paid more attention to the problem of the cut. But the cut used not for dramatic purposes (to reinforce the action), but almost autonomously for its own sake. For example, the early scenes of Giuliana with the strikers: the camera pans down over her, then cuts to an empty frame into which she slides from the bottom. In the old days, Antonioni used to say that his camera followed his characters “beyond the moments conventionally considered important for the spectator.” In *The Red Desert*, he pays as much attention to objects and landscape as to the characters. Only a moment after the characters have walked out of frame does he cut to a bit of landscape; seconds later, the characters

reappear in frame. Landscape was used extensively in *Il Grido*, too, but here its use is not so much expressive as formal. Not completely, of course: there is obviously a relationship, however tenuous, between the emotional mood of the film and the objects, the trees, the fragments of landscape. But it is tenuous. It approaches the pure beauty of, say, the opening sequence of *Marnie*, which also has little to do with the plot or theme of the film, but everything to do with cinema.

If the Hitchcock reference is too shocking, one might further compare *The Red Desert* to *Muriel*. Apart from a few superficial resemblances (the use of a singer in the music score, the relatively choppy montage, the fascination in rendering beautiful the essentially ugly, like the Medicina housing estate), both films are alike in their espousal of a construction which is dictated more by formal considerations than by dramatic relevance or expression.

RICHARD ROUD

The Landscape of the Desert

THE SCREENING OF THE RED DESERT had been at the Denham Laboratories. We drove away through sheets of rain, cutting across from the Oxford road, through the light industry sprawl of Slough, to the windswept M4. Past a factory yard with red and blue barrels stacked behind wire fencing; a great builders' crane, poised over an extension to a high street Marks and Spencer's; a rawly new building, geometrically precise in outline, planted in a field for some mysterious industrial purpose; the cold blue signs of the motorway, and the spiral twists which decorate its flyovers. We pointed these things out to each other with naïve satisfaction, like tourists who have crossed a frontier and find a sort of gratification in the fact that the landscape is still the same. Even the rain, the blurred pattern of tyre tracks beyond the windscreen wipers, the wind tugging at the car, pulled us back into Antonioni's country.

A jet of gas, lemon yellow against a pale blue sky; then the whole chimney; then a shot of a damp stretch of road, lined by people in dark clothes and those plastic raincoats which look awkwardly like polythene bags. This transition, which opens *The Red Desert*, is from something beautiful, isolated and mysterious; to the functional context in which it exists; to the human material which works messily and untidily to construct the bare, beautiful industrial artefact. Smoke rises from a rubbish-dump litter of tin cans, and the canals are silted up with a black, greasy sludge. But the workshop, where the technicians stand over their control panels, has the metallic glint of a gun-barrel, and the clinical coolness of the new technology.

It is a romantic view, no doubt, of the industrial process. But it belongs to another order of romanticism from the Soviet-style worship of controlled power, or the cottage industry idealism which expresses itself in a loathing of the conveyor-belt and the factory. It is forms and colours, architectural firmness and clarity of line, which Antonioni emphasises: the object rather than its purpose. There is a wonderful sequence in this film, momentarily comparable in feeling to the Verona airport episode in *The Eclipse*, when Corrado and Giuliana drive to a place called Medicina, where a long line of radio masts—instruments for ‘listening to the stars’—stand like feathery pylons against the sky. The first thing we are conscious of, however, is not these elegant metal towers, but a squat little shack, black and squarely substantial. Antonioni shoots the sequence so that, beyond what is actually happening in the foreground, we retain an awareness at the back of our minds of the shifting perspectives in which he holds this solid little black object and the fragile tracery of metal. “. . . I found myself in that whiteness, in that nothingness, which took shape around a black point,” he wrote in an article published in translation in *SIGHT AND SOUND*

(Winter, 1963/64). Here, again, is the black point—used, as a painter might see it, as an anchor point in an insubstantial landscape.

There is also the whiteness and emptiness, and that unfinished quality which seems characteristic of the Italian industrial scene. As in *Il Grido*, the land stretches flatly away towards a horizon lost in mist. The feeling is of wasteland, space in which buildings stand lonely and isolated, romantically adrift from their surroundings. In the traditional industrial setting—our own Black Country, for instance—the dark chimneys rise above their clutter of dejected nineteenth century streets. To be romantic about this landscape, you have (*Room at the Top*, *A Kind of Loving*, etc.) to be able to look down on it. Antonioni looks straight at his towers. And in this automated industrial world, the oil refineries and radio installations seem to have lost their connections with people, like the meccano robot toy which Giuliana encounters at night, stumping backwards and forwards in the dark across the nursery floor.

Antonioni is fascinated by the modern: that has long been obvious. He follows the contours of a bit of piping with the same kind of obsessive enchantment with which he holds his camera on Monica Vitti's face. When Giuliana wakes at night, takes her own temperature, wanders disconsolately about her flat, we react less to her distress than, uncomfortably, to the disorderly human element she is introducing among those geometrically exact railings, those parallel lines and squared-off perspectives. At the factory, a great cloud of steam gushes from the side of a building: grey, billowing, ominously beautiful, it fills the screen. We have been listening to a conversation between Corrado and Ugo, Giuliana's husband: now it's gone, scaled down and obliterated. Even in the last shots, when Giuliana walks with her little boy as she did in the opening sequence, Antonioni rounds off the film with a visual echo from the refinery. We see a pile of blue and yellow barrels, at first glimpsed mistily, out of focus, through the wire fencing, as an amorphous blue and yellow blur. In the background, as the landscape widens out, the chimney is sending its lemon gas jet into the cold sky.

We had been told all about Antonioni having the grass painted purple, the potatoes on a street vegetable stall coloured black, and so on. The idea of colour used to indicate subjective states of mind sounded dangerous because it suggested a series of perilous transitions. In fact, I could only spot one place in the film where a set actually changes colour within the context of a sequence—the awakening to the pink bedroom after the love scene—and that is a vulgarisation, and a weak one. Really, however, Antonioni is employing colour as the major unsettling element in a total landscape of disturbing strangeness. It is a winter landscape, in which people look

pinched and chilled, and the light in any case plays tricks with colour values. In the last sequence of *The Eclipse* Antonioni made the ordinary look remote and ominous. Here he takes a step back, as it were, towards the more alien surroundings of *L'Avventura* or *Il Grido*, where the characters not only felt lost, but were lost.

In this countryside around Ravenna, ships sail through the mist, as in the Norfolk Broads, so that they appear to have invaded the land. At the end of what critics seem to have agreed, on rather slender evidence, to describe as the "orgy sequence", the group of Sunday afternoon idlers precipitately abandon their harbour shack when a ship which has docked alongside hoists a yellow quarantine flag. Giuliana stares at her four friends, each standing isolated in the gathering fog, looking towards her, as stationary and remote as the group poised on the gravel walk of the formal garden in *Marienbad*. The faces are held in turn in a series of misty, questioning close-ups; then another shot of the group, still frozen in their attitudes; and then the fog comes between, blurring everything. This idea of actual fog becoming one with mental fog sounds elementary to the point of naïveté. But by taking the scene out of any realistic context, by giving the figures that formal remoteness, and by contriving to hint at a suspension of time, Antonioni makes the stylisation work as a powerful element in his sense of dislocation. Giuliana has gone beyond reason, and the film has followed her.

And this is how he handles colour, using it to dissolve order and confound expectation, to strike a series of dissonant chords or to construct a momentary visual harmony. To paint a vegetable stall greyish-black, or the leaves of a rubber plant white, to move from an all-white hotel corridor into a room

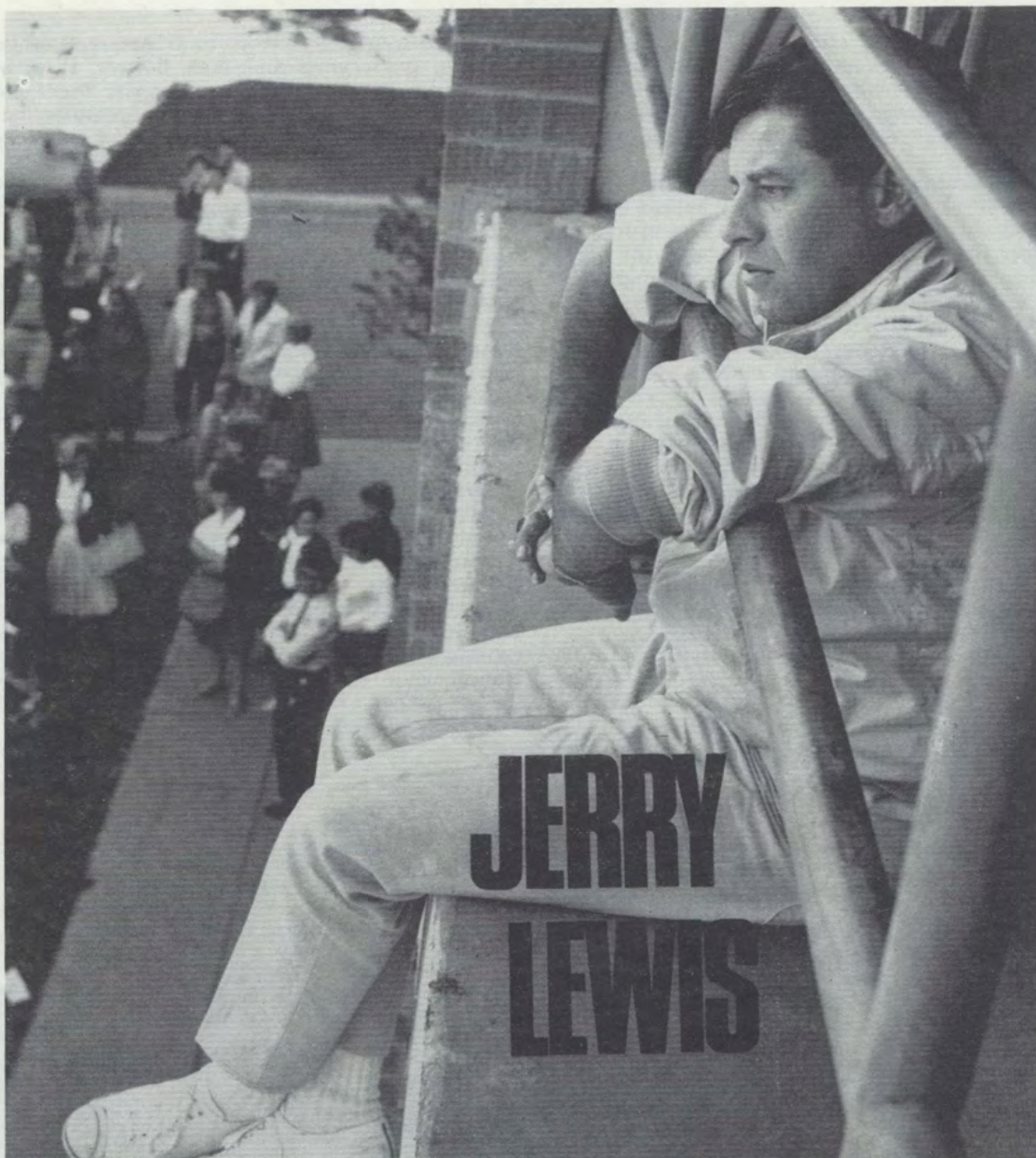
of heavy mahogany brown, or from a grey-white street to dazzling green grass and pink flowers, is to subject the audience to a series of greater or lesser visual shocks. They may laugh at the *idea* of the black potatoes, but they are pushed willy-nilly into a condition of sharpened awareness. There are no sequences in the film, and few shots, where one is not conscious of the use to which the director is putting a stretch of grass or a rusty railing, a white wall, a black, mud-choked puddle of water, or the clear red glow of a stove.

It is overwhelming; it unbalances the film; it allows the aesthetic experience to get dangerously the upper hand. But if *The Red Desert* seems to me in the long run a magnificent failure (magnificent, that is, in its courage and its ambitions), this is not because there is too much landscape, but because Antonioni has peopled it too sparsely, and has put too much faith in his own truism: that the emotions are lingering behind the technological advances, and that we are bringing nineteenth century nervous systems into twentieth century situations. Richard Roud goes into these questions in detail, and I don't want here to trespass on ground he has already covered. But Antonioni would seem, in this film, to have reached a point where his eye has gone way ahead of his ear, where what the camera keeps on wonderfully intimating in terms of landscape is liable to be undercut rather than reinforced by what the actors do and say. Alienation; non-communication; the agonised face crumpled against the clinical white wall; the unanswered appeal for reassurance; the heroine who feels that she is standing on a tilted floor, with everything sliding and slipping away from her: these are

(Continued on page 103)

UGO, CORRADO AND GIULIANA: OUTSIDE RAVENNA.





John Russell Taylor

DISCOVERED AT LAST. After fifteen years in the critical wilderness and with thirty films to his credit, Jerry Lewis seems about to achieve intellectual respectability, and it is difficult to know whether one's first reaction should be "Oh, good" or "Oh, dear". As yet, of course, the problem shows little sign of spreading beyond France: most British critics remain indifferent (even *The Nutty Professor* was generally cold-shouldered), while in America Jerry Lewis is almost as much of a dirty word as Doris Day or Joe Levine. But across the Channel things have really started moving. First Jerry Lewis was considered, if at all, as one of the lesser fixtures of Tashlin's universe, but then little by little the eager partisanship of Robert Benayoun and others began to work. In June 1962 *Cahiers du Cinéma* devoted its first article to Lewis, and with the French release of *The Nutty Professor* at the end of 1963 the floodgates opened. The script was published (as *Docteur Jerry et Mister Love*) by *L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma*, new tributes appeared in *Positif*, *Cinéma 64* and even *Midi-Minuit Fantastique*, and by the end of the year Lewis had

achieved the twin accolade of an *entretien* (two, as a matter of fact) in *Cahiers* and a retrospective at the Cinémathèque—an event which provoked *Cinéma*, normally silent as the grave about the Cinémathèque and its activities, to remark that many people thought the whole thing might be a hoax, and was anyway going too far.

In the process of all this poor Jerry Lewis is getting well and truly mythologised, and one can only feel thankful that he at least does not read French and is probably largely unaware of the amount of French ink currently being spilled over him. In any case, he is no doubt inured by now to critical disregard. Only a few months ago he wrote to me "if I were to add up all the critical acclaim I have received thus far in my career, I would end up with maybe two..."; and as far as the English-speaking world is concerned he was probably about right. Long may he continue in this state of grace; one might extend the principle of "happy is the country which has no history" to "happy is the comedian who is ignored by the critics," especially considering the number—Langdon, for instance, and dare one add Chaplin?—who have been ruined by trying to live up to their critics' image of them. For the moment at least Jerry Lewis is content to be popular, to be able, consequently, to run his career just as he wants it, and to develop according to his own canons of excellence with nobody to interfere or, however well-meaningly, to point the way for him.

* * *

And the most remarkable thing about his career to date is just how far and how spectacularly he has developed. The addition of directing, producing and writing to his repertoire of cinematic activities is the most striking evidence of this, but it is really only symptomatic of a much longer, slower and harder-won development of Jerry Lewis as a performer and inventor on film. It must, I am sure, have happened to many people as it happened to me: an initial impression of Jerry Lewis as half of a singularly unfunny comedy team kept me first of all away from a number of the Martin-and-Lewis films, then from Lewis's first films on his own. Coming back to him, quite by chance, around the time of *The Bellboy*, I was amazed to discover that somehow, somewhere along the line, the limited and not very striking comic I thought I knew had developed into a stunningly varied and inventive performer. And at that, as *The Bellboy* suggested and *The Ladies' Man* rapidly confirmed, a performer perfectly able to regulate his own effects, apply his own disciplines and get better results under his own direction than under anyone else's.

Could I then have been so wrong about him in the first place? Re-seeing some of the Martin-and-Lewis films soon disabused me of any such notion. There is no doubt that in most of them Jerry Lewis is, except for occasional flashes, very bad. Frank Tashlin, to whom I was talking about him recently, recalls that when his agent told him he was set to direct *Artists and Models* he was horrified; he had walked out of the only Martin-and-Lewis film he had seen in disgust, and a quick visit to their latest, *Three Ring Circus*, only confirmed his earlier opinion. Once started on directing *Artists and Models*, though, he was staggered by the readiness with which Lewis responded to direction; he could do anything that was asked of him, and much more. Tashlin's conclusion, which one cannot help sharing when faced with these early films, was that he had simply never before had sympathetic direction and the room or the encouragement to spread himself. The characters which had been attributed to him and to Martin in their screen appearances were strangling both of them by forcing them into an uncongenial comic-and-straight-man formula quite different from the anything-goes nightclub act with which they had made their name. In *Artists and Models*, and again in *Hollywood or Bust*, there are signs of a new Jerry Lewis emerging with a new confidence in his own abilities, but they are only signs.

Let us brusquely skip over the first few films Jerry Lewis

appeared in by himself—among them two more, *Rock-a-Bye Baby* and *The Geisha Boy*, directed by Tashlin—and come to the bit where it gets really interesting: the appearance of Jerry Lewis as director, writer and producer as well as star of his own films. The decisive moment, as Tashlin tells it, came during the shooting of *Cinderfella*. Lewis had a number of his depressed days, until finally one day he could not be persuaded to emerge from his dressing-room. Tashlin went to reason with him, and after a lot of evasions Lewis finally admitted that what sometimes deeply depressed him was the idea that "In here I'm boss, but as soon as I go out on to the set you're the boss." Tashlin drew the obvious conclusion, that Lewis could only resolve this situation by directing himself.

Lewis agreed, but still held back, until finally an argument with the studio about the release date of *Cinderfella* pushed him into making up and shooting *The Bellboy* more or less as he went along in order to provide an alternative film for release on the date prescribed. Since then (1960) he has made seven films (apart from a guest appearance in *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*), four directed by himself and three by Tashlin. In the Tashlin ones, apparently, he is simply a performer, regarding them as a holiday in which he can, now quite happily, relax and just do what someone else tells him to. His role as producer on them is confined to casting and a final say in the editing—which has been exercised against Tashlin's wishes only on *Cinderfella*, from which Lewis cut most of the passing gags to make it more of a dramatic comedy than Tashlin envisaged.

* * *

On his own films, though, it is quite otherwise. It is extraordinary to see how much he has evidently learnt from Tashlin and yet how radically different the films he has directed himself are from those in which Tashlin has directed him. Take the question of construction. Tashlin, of course, was a cartoonist before he became a writer and director, and it has often been remarked that his films are at their best very similar to cartoons with actors: he cannot resist the one-shot visual gag or Tom-and-Jerry orgies of destruction from which his characters emerge miraculously unscathed. Therefore his films naturally tend to have a slight story-line which is treated as a pretext for a string of gags. The story is usually the least important and interesting part, and it is easy to understand why he should be appalled at Jerry Lewis's editing of *Cinderfella*, though as it happens the resultant film worked remarkably well in its own (revised) terms.

Jerry Lewis has taken over from Tashlin the taste for quick, unconnected gags, but in his own films he either indulges it completely or rejects it entirely. *The Bellboy*, *The Ladies' Man* and *The Errand Boy* go far further than any of Tashlin's films in abandoning plot altogether: *The Bellboy* has no plot at all, and it would be stretching the meaning of the term to attribute more than a wisp of plot to either of the others. Instead they simply juxtapose a succession of comic ideas, with no stronger continuity than that they all in some way involve the central character. And, obviously, that they all spring from one man's highly personal and idiosyncratic idea of what is funny, or, to be even vaguer, what is interesting. Sometimes the effects may be pathetic (to me Jerry Lewis's least happy register), like the scenes with the puppets in *The Errand Boy*; sometimes they may be bizarre, like the scene in the white room in *The Ladies' Man* or the tango with George Raft in the same film; sometimes they may just be curious reflections of personal pre-occupations, like the "tribute" to Stan Laurel in *The Bellboy*. But whatever their intention, they are all there finally for no better reason (is there a better reason?) than that they have in some way caught the film-maker's fancy.

Just when we might have concluded that this strictly discontinuous style was Lewis's one and only way of film-making, though, he turned in a quite different direction with *The Nutty Professor*, a dramatic comedy which cuts irrelevant gags to an absolute minimum, harking back instead to the form he



had forced on Tashlin in *Cinderfella*. Again a familiar pre-existent story is taken, and in certain respects turned inside out to make comedy instead of drama. In *Cinderfella* the change is simple: make Cinderella a man, and at once the story veers towards comedy. In *The Nutty Professor* it is more complicated. As in Wolf Mankowitz's version of the Jekyll-and-Hyde story for Hammer, Jekyll is dull and unattractive and Hyde flashily desirable. Given this departure, however, the story is otherwise taken remarkably straight, and turned to comic ends entirely by the subtlety of writing, directing and acting, which makes not only the shambling professor (an easy target) but also the repellent, irresistible Buddy Love both consistent characters manoeuvred by circumstance into funny situations. *The Patsy*, though it lacks the concentration of *The Nutty Professor* and has weak patches which force one to judge it bit by bit rather than as a whole, continues the same line: it again is a dramatic comedy with a clear and coherent plot and on a vaguely similar theme, the transformation of an ugly duckling into a show-business swan. The next, *The Family Jewels*, also promises to be in the dramatic comedy line, but beyond that it is impossible to speculate about what turn Jerry Lewis's film-making career will take. But at least one does feel the temptation to speculate; it is a matter of real interest, which is rare enough in Hollywood today, heaven knows.

How does Jerry Lewis come to command this special sort of interest? By being very funny and making very funny films, naturally. But what exactly does he do that is so funny? That is more difficult to answer. As a performer he has his specialities, of course. There is the fantastic proliferation of mute or incoherent responses to one basic stimulus, as in the marvellous scene in *Cinderfella* in which his horrible family first show some signs of amiability towards him, and he responds with a succession of reactions like a charade-player of genius who has somehow gone berserk on the hearth-rug. There is his entirely personal way of mangling English, with nouns turning into verbs, verbs into adjectives, notions duplicating themselves, twisting, turning, dividing and re-forming in a babble which stays always tantalisingly on the edge of comprehension, just this side of total disintegration into gibberish. There are the scenes in which he, or rather the character he plays, seems most completely to forget himself under the spell of music, as in the unforgettable jiving sequences of *The Nutty Professor* and *The Patsy* and the wooing of the Princess in *Cinderfella*.

And then there are the specialities which go over rather into the realm of Jerry Lewis, writer-director. Ideas recur from film to film in various disguises: the famous misogyny, for instance, which he shares with and has perhaps to a certain extent taken over from Tashlin, since the passion for feminine grotesques of all sorts occurs as much in the Tashlin-Lewis films as in Lewis's own (the most grotesque-packed of the whole oeuvre are *The Ladies' Man* and *Who's Minding the Store?*). There is a constant relish for playing round with the conventions of the cinema: witness the scenes in *The Ladies' Man* which deliberately treat the frame of the picture as something tangible of which the characters within it are aware, or those which tease us by alternately proffering and withholding conscious knowledge of the vast set in which most of the action takes place as just that, a set in a studio; or devices like the final shots of *The Patsy*, which dismiss the whole thing as an illusion fabricated in a studio and send the technicians home along with the audience.

But anyway it is rather artificial to attempt a separation such as this between Jerry Lewis the star and Jerry Lewis the director: in none of his own films can any valid distinction be drawn between the two functions. It is curious to note, indeed, that the better and more demanding the star's part in

it, the better the film tends to be also in terms of sheer direction—as though all Jerry Lewis's faculties work in unison and are all engaged to the same degree from moment to moment, rather than maintaining some sort of balance depending on the amount of time he can spare from acting on direction or vice versa. One might say that as a writer-director he is variably successful at finding materials which show his executive gifts to best advantage, but it seems to go deeper than that: *The Nutty Professor* in particular gives him his most difficult task yet as an actor, and he not only carries off both roles to perfection, but directs with a sustained brilliance and control which far outstrip his mentor Tashlin and put many a seasoned Hollywood director to shame.

Consider, for example, the opening sequence of laboratory disaster, leading into the wonderful confrontation of the professor, Kelp, with the Dean: a fantastic tangle of immaculately timed running gags, from the dirty footsteps across the spotless carpet to the harmless-looking pocket watch which roars out a deafening Souza march when opened, and the chair into which Kelp sinks further and further as the Dean (Del Moore, one of the most constantly enjoyable of the Jerry Lewis stock company) tries to reach the formidable mind which lurks somewhere in the human shambles before him. Somehow, for all the controlled grotesquery of the performance and its beautifully realised environment, the character of Kelp is believable, and so, even more astonishingly, is his alter ego Buddy Love.

Love is introduced to us by way of a brilliant transformation scene in which Jerry Lewis flashes dementedly through a succession of famous movie monsters, thereby giving his technical team a chance to excel even their normal superior standards in colour photography, editing, etc., and ending in a stunningly wild and whirling crane shot away from the writhing professor. Cut to his arrival at the local hot night spot, and the stunned expressions of the bystanders, seen from his point of view, as he enters. At the end of this he is revealed, not as the physical monster we have been expecting, but in all his flashy splendour as Buddy Love, arrogant idol of the campus set—and surely the only case on record of a male comedian who has succeeded in being both funny and sexy at the same time. Both these sequences make extreme demands on Jerry Lewis as a performer, and yet (or consequently?) both are among the best of any in his films on the level of sheer *mise en scène*. *The Patsy* demonstrates the close linkage of the two sorts of inspiration even more clearly, since in it easily the best directed scenes are those—the singing lesson and the recording and television presentation of the hero's hit song—which must have been the most difficult and demanding for him to perform.

It is encouraging to any consideration of where Jerry Lewis will go from here that he shows every sign of knowing and sticking to his last (no apparent temptation to play Hamlet, unless we count a solitary foray into television drama as *The Jazz Singer*), while at the same time he evinces no desire to play safe within his chosen field of comedy. Naturally, it must help that he does not need to: he remains the sole unshakeable star in the English-speaking cinema, turning out two films a year regular as clockwork, selling them entirely on his own name and regularly making money on every single one. (Even the unprofitability of *The Ladies' Man* and *The Errand Boy*, which provoked a rumpus with Paramount and an imposed script for *It's Only Money* saved by him and Tashlin only through an eleventh hour bit of sabotage, seems to have been merely relative to the extravagant profitability of his other films.) In the film world today extreme popularity is the only reliable licence to experiment there is: long may Jerry Lewis hold it in the palm of his hand.

*the tone of
time* / NOTES ON

NOSTALGIA BY TOM MILNE

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

PENELOPE HOUSTON

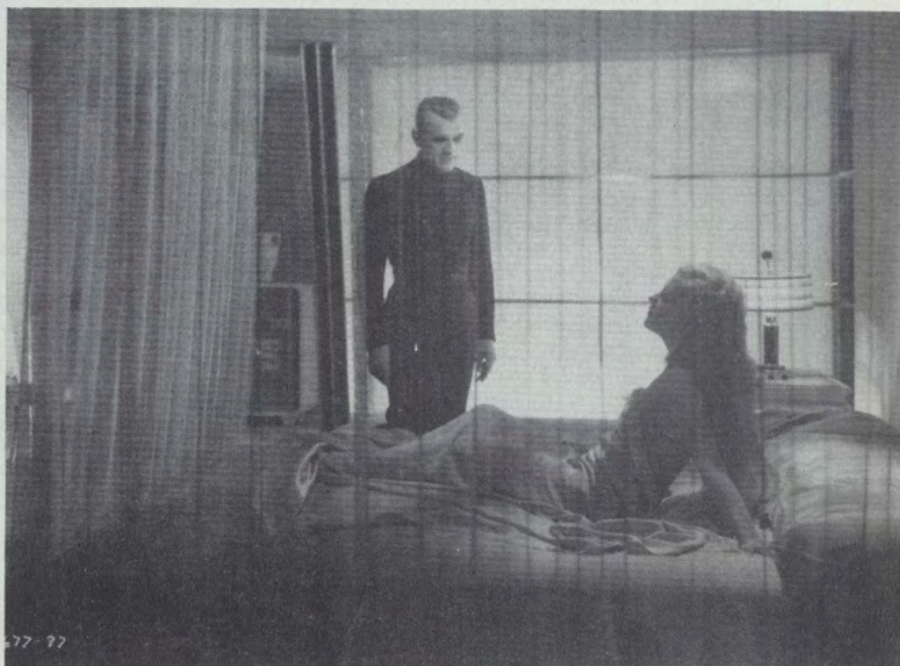
AND RICHARD ROUD



GISH AND GARBO ON THE SET OF "THE WIND."



"QUAI DES BRUMES"; GABIN AND MICHELE MORGAN.



"THE BLACK CAT"; BORIS KARLOFF.

"... And I begin to ask myself what it could have been, this unremembered state which brought with it no logical proof of its existence, but only the sense that it was... a real state in whose presence other states of consciousness melted and vanished."—SWANN'S WAY.

PROUST'S EXPERIENCE ON TASTING the madeleine remains the classic literary evocation of nostalgia, that powerful if indefinable condition of mind. Any filmgoer is likely to know the sensation, if hardly at the Proustian level of intensity. And it is a sensation (despite Noël Coward's famous comment on the mysterious potency of cheap music) which only really came into its own artistically through the movies. A stage production can be nostalgic—but on purpose. A painting can be nostalgic—but only momentarily, and only as a by-product. Reading is not really a short cut to nostalgia: even if one is pursuing Proust himself through those labyrinthine byways of memory, the evocation is indirect. However much precision and emotive force a writer puts into conjuring up a landscape, the most that the reader is likely to do is to superimpose the written description over some existing scene in his own mind. He remembers an actual country lane, or an actual house by the seashore, and does his best to adapt it to the writer's imagery.

The cinema, however, keeps nostalgia constantly on tap, and it is only a matter of giving the tap a turn. Everyone agrees on this, even Miss Susan Sontag in that now notorious *Monitor* interview, when she asserted that *Double Indemnity* was a bad film preserved by some nostalgic elements (Barbara Stanwyck's jangling Forties blonde; the forbidding sleaziness of the settings), though without admitting that if these elements do still fascinate to such an extent, there must have been rather more than that to the film itself. A special power of the cinema is not just to suggest but to re-create totally, to plunge us into a series of Proustian acts of recapture.

But the recapturing, precisely, of what? An actual experience of our own? That ought to be an easy one, although in fact the response is less likely to be one of delighted rediscovery than of querulous questioning. The cinema is liable to get the details wrong, and it is detail that makes up the memory. Or some shared emotional state, like the national mood in war? Humphrey Jennings' films, for instance, first seemed like an immediate pipeline to the general mood; they then went through a period of appearing intensely embarrassing; and they have now recovered, with time, their original truth of feeling, plus an additional and entirely nostalgic charge. But it doesn't have to be Jennings. There is Betty Grable, or vintage Rita Hayworth, or even Vera Lynn, whose Forties recording of "We'll Meet Again" over the last shots of *Dr. Strangelove* afforded a unique combination of nostalgia for the past and apprehension for the future.

There is a nostalgia, harder to pin down, for worlds we have never experienced, or worlds that never were. The Western has it built-in, which may be one reason why some people dislike Westerns. Whole areas of the American cinema can induce it, even for people who have never crossed the Atlantic, by their reminders of the great American innocence, that neat, puritanical, regulated world presided over by the Gish girl with her rosebud mouth, her pinafore and ringlets. (Not the same, somehow, with Mary Pickford's ringlets and that more playful lost world: it is as interesting to see who doesn't arouse nostalgia as to see who does.)

Already, one is admitting nostalgia not for a vanished reality, but for a movie image. Here the territory opens out, and the term itself becomes progressively harder to pin down.

Nostalgia equals home-sickness, by dictionary definition. But it is scarcely home-sickness that one is likely to feel for, say, the dark world of the Forties thriller, for the night car-rides, the rain drenching down on upturned coat-collars, the blondes draped over pianos, and the sulky small-arms fire of the dialogue. A world that never was, outside a few books and films; a world no one really knew; but a tremendously nostalgic—for want of a better word—screen reality. The essence of the experience is that there should be some kind of immediate recognition, and also a realisation that the world, or dream, is one that is never likely to come again.

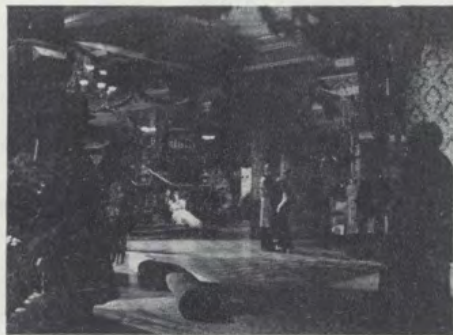
A popular art lives through its clichés, which depend on this instant recognition: it exhausts some vein and moves on, leaving behind it the abandoned mine-shafts and sealed-off corridors. To re-enter the mine is to rediscover a whole worked-out vein of imagination. Nostalgia for the ascertainable facts about a period really plays a very minor part: it is nostalgia for its fantasies that grips us. But the fantasies, to begin with, must have been realised with some authority, or at least bravura. One can't imagine a flicker of nostalgic feeling for *Bicycle Thieves*, or for most of the other neo-realist classics, or indeed in general for many of the cinema's most strongly realistic or hardily opportunistic achievements. They had an existence in time, and if they were good enough they transcend time, but on quite another level. The nostalgic pull, like the first taste of the tea-soaked madeleine, involves us involuntarily. It relates to a film's quality, in that it has to do with the power with which the image comes across. But there are good films which never acquire it, and bad films which are almost preserved by it in spite of themselves.

Some films are born with this power; some acquire it over the years. It is not an artistic element which can be consciously created, nor has it much to do with the mere attraction of the old-fashioned, with the quaintness or charm that may lurk in the volume of old photographs. All sorts of definable elements contribute to the indefinable: the forgotten slang, the style in faces and the style in clothes, the chirpiness of the Thirties heroine (Jean Arthur) or the gloom of the Forties heroine (Joan Crawford), the look of a street corner or a motor car. But the point is that the car, for instance, is still there, still carrying its driver across the screen at an unchanging twenty-four frames a second, still waiting to be held up by that twenty-year-old traffic light. It is the combination of the thing happening now and the thing forever vanished that takes this special cinematic trick.

To everyone his own nostalgia; or his own chosen fantasies. This is, perhaps, the submerged fraction of the iceberg beneath the surface of critical writing. It affects not our judgment, if we can really keep that cool and balanced, but our instincts. One might say that no film critic who would admit himself entirely unaffected by this hard-pulling undertow has really got the hang of the cinema; and that it is also one of the reasons why critical fallibility is what it is.

In talking around this theme among ourselves, we found predictably large areas of common ground (which might be taken as the shared memories of a generation), and equally large areas of total disagreement. Mixing nostalgias is probably as dangerous as mixing drinks; but here are some instances by way of illustration.

to everyone his own nostalgia . . .



THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS

The end of the great dance at the old Amberson mansion; the fine, romantic reminiscence, seen already as a moment frozen out of time, so that on the screen, after all the vitality of earlier in the evening, one has the sense of a clock slowly running down, striking one sad, final note. In both *Ambersons* and *Kane*, Welles showed that he knew from the beginning all about the way the power of nostalgia works in films: he harnessed it not only through his themes, but through endless details of emotion and technique. Deep focus is even a nostalgic form of camerawork, peering over the shoulders of the characters so that it seems to penetrate shadowy recesses of memory. At the beginning of *Kane*, the camera moves over the great gates of the house, delaying entry into those haunted preserves of Kane's life. Both Welles' masterpieces are the works of a man obsessed by the strangeness and sadness of time, picking his way among the bric à brac of the past: *Kane* a great open store-house, like Hearst's San Simeon, and *Ambersons* a more austere, shuttered survival. The Welles of twenty years ago was one of the great American romantics, with all the romantic's passion for moments never to be re-experienced and questions never to be answered. "... So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."—P.H.



GO WEST

Buster Keaton, alone on a wide but domesticated prairie, waiting patiently not to milk the cow, but for the cow to milk itself. I haven't seen *Go West*, but the still seems to conjure up a great deal of Keaton's extraordinary world. He

wasn't, as is so often suggested, hostile to the machine: he just had rather too much faith in its powers of independent or co-operative action. Keaton and the cow, one feels, could sit there for ever, lost in mutually despairing contemplation. Keaton, like so many other film artists, repeatedly communicates a regretful fondness for some simpler, lost world. His own comic presence (in films like *Our Hospitality* or *Sherlock Junior*) may be the disrupting element: he careers over waterfalls, or engages in maniac chases. But the far from deadpan face settles into a glare of conscience-stricken melancholy at his own inroads into Arcadia. Unlike Chaplin, who is usually the energetic centre of his own world, and whose films (for me, at least) carry no echoes of lost enchantments, Keaton dreads the disturbance of order and discipline, longs to settle back into a great, unruffled calm. Did he use this feeling for tranquillity as a conscious counterpoint to his urgent comedy, or was it simply part of his personality? It doesn't matter: but it does make nostalgia something fundamental to the Keaton world.—P.H.



TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT

Bogart played the deep-sea fisherman who didn't want to get involved in the war, and eventually found himself digging bullets out of wounded Frenchmen, and otherwise lending a hand. Bacall, in her first film, was practising something called the 'wolverine look'. *To Have and Have Not* is Hemingway debased and generally kicked around, but it has a romantic authenticity which is not just that of the Howard Hawks adventure, no special vintage, but of its period. Heroines vaguely smouldered; everyone in the films seemed always to be on the verge of betraying everyone else; the Bogart hero wore his toughness at the same jaunty angle as his yachting cap; and in the end all these equivocal characters joined what, one remembers with a certain reluctance, they probably called the Fight for Democracy. Why does one look back on all this with such affection? Not just because they don't make them like that any more, but because this whole screen affectation of an abrasive cynicism, a licensed ruthlessness, had its own elegiac feeling even at the time when the films were being made. The adventures were getting a little

tarnished and no one any longer quite believed in them. What they did still believe in was the adventurer, the legend of sophisticated toughness. Hemingway's 'grace under pressure'; but seen through a glass, darkly.—P.H.



WENT THE DAY WELL?

This is nostalgia of a personal kind. Not for the real war (one isn't nostalgic about that anyhow, though Humphrey Jennings' shots of rainwater dripping into static water tanks, and barricaded street corners, bring back a depressing kind of total recall), but for wartime fantasies. These were the years when one inspected nuns warily, half expecting paratroopers' boots under their habits, and played with notions that unloved schoolteachers might be unmasked as spies. Cavalcanti's film, with script by Graham Greene, preserved, when last seen a few years ago, this full flavour of absurd and agreeable menace. The Home Guard, with twigs in their hats; the village street, impossibly peaceful and exotically remote; the irruption of the Germans, disguised in British uniforms and actually slaughtering the dear old ladies behind the post-office counter; the defence by Marie Lohr of her manor-house. At the time it was made, *Went the Day Well?* perhaps seemed rather more factual (it had, after all, a good documentary pedigree) and also rather more impertinent, in its relation to the destruction of real villages across the Channel. Now it's a piece of make-believe war played out on the nursery floor. But there's a strong imaginative tension, sustained by the strength of the film's affections: a real threat, as well as a fond foolishness.—P.H.



CRONACA DI UN AMORE

Early Antonioni, and another of those stills which seem to conjure up in a single shot the precise point at which the mental landscape and the real one make contact. The straight road; the car headlights; the empty countryside, dying away into the mist; and the preposterous man-made objects, standing there like some pointlessly grandiose gesture of defiance. Just as there are stretches of the coastline of northern France which always look as though they had been constructed out of a Boudin canvas, rather than vice versa, so there are all sorts of bits of countryside (not only north Italian) which Antonioni seems to have taken over. One finds oneself reacting to the real, that is to say, rather than to the films, with a shock of recognition. It is not a painter's landscape but a film-maker's: a landscape in motion. And it is entirely European, overcast by a melancholy that belongs to the European mind, by the foreboding that hangs over country which has too often been fought over. There are no residents here, only people passing through. The landscape is remote, alien and vaguely dangerous; the cars look as though they were in flight from something. There is the feeling of an end rather than a beginning: a foretaste of a nostalgia from the end of the world.—P.H.



MUSKETEERS OF PIG ALLEY

East Side, West Side. This still happens to come from a 1912 Griffith film, *Musketeers of Pig Alley*; the girl with the bundle is Lillian Gish. Apart from the fact that it is a particularly beautiful still, another film of the period would do: for this represents to me not Griffith, but the whole saga of America at the turn of the century, a few years after the closing of the frontier and the last great wave of immigration—the one, incidentally, that washed up my grandparents. Griffith probably meant Lillian's pure Anglo-Saxon beauty to be set off by the Lower East Side surroundings, but for me the others are equally touching: the world of the

push-carts, the world of night school for immigrants, the wry discovery that the streets of New York were not after all paved with gold, and yet the still potent dream of the supposedly limitless future, Gatsby's green light. This obviously connects with old family photographs and memories, but then my generation was the first who could illustrate—and control—their parents' memories with the "objective" record of the cinema. One more thing is perhaps relevant: in 1912 my mother was about the same age as Lillian Gish.—R.R.



MY MAN

Second Avenue Rose. This is a tough one to explain, not only because no one of the Fanny Brice stills can give an idea of her infinite variety, but also because a lot depends on her voice. You've got to have heard her sing, as only she could, "I'd rather be blue/thinking of you/I'd rather be blue over you/than be happy with somebody else" or "Just being miserable/gives her a thrill/when a woman loves a man." But she was not only a torch singer, she was a great comedienne: Beatrice Lillie once said that Fanny had taught her everything she knew. And it is as the basically Twenties figure of the wise-cracking yet sentimental girl, essentially New York, probably Jewish, that Fanny deserves her place among the archetypal figures in nostalgia alley. Later examples like Barbara Stanwyck were soured by the bitterness of the Thirties; Fanny belongs to the expanding American world of the Twenties when a girl could, if she tried hard enough, both get along and get her man. Hollywood often tried to evoke the world of Broadway. Fanny was both Broadway and Second Avenue. She is what the little girl on the far right of the *Musketeers of Pig Alley* still probably grew up to be.—R.R.



DAISY KENYON

Night and the City. This nostalgia is shared by many. For me, however, it is not the sinister night world that is appealing; rather, it is the night seen as the time when Things Happen, the time of adventure in the Big City. This still from *Daisy Kenyon* sums up a lot of it: the lonely man, the little Italian restaurant with the red-checked table-cloth, the movie marquee outside, the inviting, semi-deserted streets. It is also the world of the war, the one I grew up in. But this nostalgia is really out of time and history: it is a generalised urban nostalgia. Perhaps it ties in with my first trip, without parents, to New York; dinner at an Italian restaurant in Greenwich Village called Peter's Backyard, and then—a Foreign Film, *Drôle de Drame*, afterwards. But most likely my activities on this first trip to New York were conditioned by what I had already seen in the movies (Nature imitates Art). It would be interesting—if horrifying—to learn just how much the movies have formed the fantasy life and even the romantic life of the moviegoer.—R.R.



LES VAMPIRES

The World We Never Knew. *Les Vampires* is a great film for reasons which have nothing to do with nostalgia. Yet it would be foolish to deny its nostalgic content. And this nostalgia is all the more poignant because it is a world which one almost knew. During a television broadcast of the McCarthy hearings, my 89-year-old grandmother suddenly came out with, "Communists, Communists. We had them in my time too. Only we called them anarchists." Nostalgia seems to relate only to the period covered by the memory of living man. Or perhaps even to the period since the invention of the camera. For only since Daguerre or Niepce do we really know what things looked like—and without this knowledge, nostalgia is impossible. Obviously, Feuillade is more complex. For it is not just the street lamps, the cars, the buildings which contribute; it is the feeling for a world which is menaced, soon to disappear. What makes Feuillade so great is that he not only evokes the world of the Nineties; he also shows us the elements which condemned it. And he, like us, seems to be torn by his feelings for the charm of that world and his conviction that it deserved to pass away.—R.R.



LES PARENTS TERRIBLES

Family Portrait. *Les Parents Terribles*, unlike all my other exhibits of nostalgia, evokes something for which nostalgia is obviously an inadequate word. For while one can be nostalgic for something one never knew, it would seem difficult to be nostalgic for something that never was. The world Cocteau has created is not really France of the Thirties—or at least, not exclusively. It is even less a case-book story of a dominating mother. If it were, if that were all, it would scarcely have its peculiar fascination. Here is an example of how movies transcend their subject matter, how they plug into something more profound. (This is true of films much less accomplished than *Les Parents Terribles*.) But in this case, into what? Damned if I can say. It all centres, obviously, on Yvonne de Bray, but who or what is she playing? The Mother? One hesitates to suggest the Womb, but the analogy with this closed-off, over-heated apartment is easily apparent. Maybe the hushed conversations, the coffee-drinking in the kitchen, the gatherings in the hall—all the comings and goings—evoke the Family at its greatest moments: Births and Funerals.—R.R.



THE GENERAL

The American small town. Rows of neat wooden houses bordering a shady lane and enclosed by neat white fences, sunny porches out front, chickens at the back, the motherly lady keeping order in the kitchen, the neighbours being neighbourly, and everybody with all the time in the world to spare. Perhaps the romantic countryside of Keaton's *The General* and *Our Hospital-*

ity, of Griffith's *True Heart Susie*, never really existed; perhaps it was a dream of simplicity too good to be true, a Utopia which had to be invented for its powerful nostalgic pull. The sun shines constantly in what seems to be an eternal spring, simple faith conquers all problems, and above all, lovers are trusting, loyal and true. Marion Mack might momentarily suspect Buster of draft-dodging, and he might wring her neck in a passing fit of exasperation, but no real cloud darkens their romance. Robert Harron might be dazzled by the milliner from Brightville who spends her sinful day dancing with the fast set, but in the end he comes back to Lillian Gish—the enchanting, the pure in heart, the American heroine who waits in a fresh print dress, cupid's bow mouth demurely pursed.—T.M.



MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE

Seeing *Frankenstein* at a very early age, doubled with *Dracula* in an all-horror bill (*how* I got in remains a mystery), I remember being nonplussed at experiencing, perhaps for the first time, completely contradictory feelings: not only the expected horror and revulsion, but also sympathy for a monster so mercilessly hounded to his death. Much later, Cesare's silhouette gliding along the wall towards Jane's bedroom, and his guilty flight across the rooftops bearing her body in his arms, dredged the feeling up again. The image that haunts me is a recurring one: Frankenstein's monster slowly moves towards the girl in the white wedding-gown, irresistibly drawn by her beauty; King Kong holds Fay Wray aloft, pawing her dress with infinite delicacy; the dagger in Cesare's hand is arrested when his eyes fall on the sleeping girl. Beauty and the Beast, after all, is one of the archetypal fairytales, and it is not surprising that it should conjure feelings of nostalgia when it moves from the nursery to the horror film. But for the unfortunate monsters there is no fairy godmother waiting to turn them into Prince Charming; there is only death.—T.M.



THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

A world of strange fears and irrational comforts is conjured up as the wicked ogre of childhood nightmare stretches out long, hungry hands from the dark under the bed. The danger is real, so are the small town settings, but Laughton tells his story as a child—or a poet—might have imagined it. The haunting sequence when the children finally escape the clutches of Harry Powell and fall asleep as their skiff drifts through the night is a perfect realisation of that moment when the blankets pulled tightly over the head drive all terrors away. The night becomes friendly, birds and animals silently line the river bank as the natural world watches over the children in their sleep. The preacher riding slowly past, silhouetted against the skyline; the murdered Willa sitting bolt upright in the jeep at the bottom of the river, her hair "wavin' lazy and soft around her like meadow grass under flood waters"; the hunter outside the house baying to the moon in a hymn; the hunted inside breaking the charm by joining in. All the images of the film are those of a fairytale: exciting, beautiful and strange by day, but when night falls, turning to dark, brooding malevolence.—T.M.



TIH MINH

Once upon a time, when villains were villains and not just thugs or coldly-calculating supermen, men of imagination indulged in grandly impossible visions. Without benefit of the nuclear devices which make things all too easy for 007's adversaries, they ingeniously threatened the world under banners such as "God Strike England". Professorial in both mind and appearance, they played the game, and they played it properly in a variety of elaborate disguises, with the bushily obvious false

beard as an indispensable adjunct. These beards, and the frock-coats which went with them, instilled an old-world courtesy even when they went visiting to deliver a poisoned handshake, packed a boa-constrictor for despatch in a hamper, or stole in black hood and tights into a lady's chamber. Heroes were given a sporting chance, alerted by the cryptic messages sent at every opportunity; and heroines might be entombed in dungeons, lassoed from bedroom windows, or turned into somnambulists by mysterious drugs, but they never had to fear for their virtue. And, when right and justice finally had their way, they knew how to die—like Kistna of *Tih Minh*, falling from a perilous cable-car into a reservoir and last seen as a clenched fist raised in defiance against the world. Villainy, alas, has lost its touch of chivalry.—T.M.



A GIRL IN EVERY PORT

What is it about Louise Brooks, the most haunting face in the history of the cinema? Partly, I suppose, that "beauty as blinding as ten galaxial suns" so fervently sung by Ado Kyrrou; and partly that air of animal sexuality, shared by all the screen's great women from Dietrich's Lola-Lola to Arletty's Garance. But then—*Nymph, in thy orisons Be all my sins remembered*—take a look at those eyes. Just as Garbo was set apart by her mysterious quality of withdrawal, so Louise Brooks was set apart by her eyes. Whether playing the insatiable Lulu of *Pandora's Box* or the midinette beauty queen of *Prix de Beauté*, she carries with her an aura

of decadence which inevitably brings destruction; men kill or are killed for her sake; and out of the chaos around her, those candid eyes gaze from some unimaginable depths of innocent purity, striving to understand. "The great art of films," Louise Brooks once wrote, "does not consist of descriptive movement of face and body but in the movements of thought and soul transmitted in a kind of intense isolation." The intense isolation of Louise Brooks still has an irresistible appeal, calling, perhaps, on our own lost innocence.—T.M.



THE BIG SLEEP

One of the most nostalgic things about the film, for me, is its amber-like quality of preserving people, attitudes, ideas, forever unchanged at a particular moment of time. Often, consequently, there is a tremendous pathos about old films which derives directly from our knowing now what nobody knew when they were made. Consider, for example, all those performers for whom dazzling careers were predicted. To see Martha Vickers in *The Big Sleep*, on the threshold of a spectacular stardom which in fact always eluded her, is for me always a powerfully nostalgic experience, because just for the moment it puts me back completely to the time before that great beginning had seen a final inning, when no one did or could know what happened next. Certainly the feeling is not so strong when we know precisely what happened; James Dean and Marilyn Monroe are not nostalgic, not anyhow in this way, because the pathos is too easy and built-in. But what fascinates me is not really whatever *did* happen, but the impotence of what came after to change in any way the film's image of a futureless then. And this is

not, either, necessarily nostalgia for a lived experience. True, I *remember* the excitement over Martha Vickers; but I find an equal pathos in seeing now, say, George O'Brien in *Sunrise* or *Noah's Ark*, just because, even though this was years before I was born, for me and I suppose for everyone else George O'Brien will always be slim, and handsome, and 25, and any connection with the brisk, well-preserved sexagenarian of the same name in *Cheyenne Autumn* remains purely coincidental.—J.R.T.



THE MAN IN GREY

Nothing is so ineffably period as another era's vision of the past. I find a constant fascination in watching how history is reinterpreted from year to year, according to the fashions and preoccupations of the moment. Now, when we see *Senso* or *The Leopard*, our first sensation is amazement at the feeling of truth their evocation of the mid-nineteenth century produces. But presumably in a few years time we shall be saying of them "How Fiftyish!" or "How Sixtyish!", as the case may be. And so, on a less exalted level, one can experience vividly and immediately some feeling of what it was like to live in 1943, or 1937, or 1925, by looking again not at how they saw themselves in popular cinema, but how they saw the past, made over in the film's dream factories. I sometimes feel a powerful nostalgia for the 1930's vision of early nineteenth century life (much more than for the period itself, which has never appealed to me greatly): in *Quality Street*, for instance, or *David Copperfield*. Or the Forties view of the Nineties, when the type of feminine beauty in vogue and even many of the styles of hair and dress were far more sympathetic than they have been at any time since. Of course, growing up with a share in this particular dream-world has a lot to do with it. I am sure that Regency life was not in the slightest like Gainsborough pictured it in *The Man in Grey*, with Phyllis Calvert presiding genteelly over the silver teapot and doing her ladylike best to take no notice of the dark doings which were going on all round her. But what does that matter to me? Strange, the potency of cheap fiction; therein slumbers the collective unconscious of an era.—J.R.T.



LOVE STORY

During the war my family took under their wing an airman who was 'sensitive', and demonstrated his sensitivity mainly by a devotion to the Warsaw Concerto so excessive that he would go AWOL whenever *Dangerous Moonlight* was playing within a hundred miles just to see it again. His little eccentricity was regarded with something like reverence by everyone else, and high Forties concerto films now always summon up for me that particular wartime attitude to culture and people who were, however strangely, afflicted with it. For then artists were all, literally or metaphorically, in battledress, and appreciation of culture became something of a patriotic duty. It was easiest, of course, if the culture was glamorous: Margaret Lockwood mooning over the Cornish Rhapsody on the clifftops while stalwart Stewart Granger flew off into the sunset, but Paul Nash lithographs in the British Restaurant; the Ballet Rambert touring indefatigably; *Penguin New Writing*, combative texts from Victor Gollancz, and art books about Christopher Wood littering the bookshop-spy centre of *Next of Kin*; C.E.M.A. exhibitions of neo-Romantic watercolours in the village hall; lunchtime concerts in the factory canteen—these all had their time of genuine popularity: these, after all, were some of the things we were fighting for. *The Red Shoes* ("Why do you want to dance, Miss Page?" "Why do you want to live, Mr. Lermontov?") was the final flare-up of this sort of genuinely popular culture, and the Festival of Britain at once its apotheosis and its death rattle. —J.R.T.



DODSWORTH

Dodsworth contains a moment which is for me one of the most poignant in the whole of cinema. Ruth Chatterton has been out on the lake, if I remember the context aright with her gigolo lover, and has had a tiff with her long-suffering husband. Sweeping back to her room she snatches off the bow in her hair and flings it pettishly down on the dressing table. And it emits a dry, plastic rustle. For the bow, believe it or not, is made of cellophane. Well, no doubt the character is not exactly cream of the cream, being a pushy nouveau-riche American, but at least she is very rich, and would be wearing the latest novelties even at the risk of evident vulgarity. And of course, on consideration: "You're the National Gallery, You're Garbo's salary, You're Cellophane . . ." But what an extraordinary glimpse into a vanished world. A world where cellophane was new and smart and no doubt expensive, a world of pre-war glamour and luxury where all the most important dramas of life took place in boudoirs, beauticians' and powder rooms. In fact the powder room in drama, from *The Women* to *All About Eve*, could provide a suitable subject for a thesis. It all creates in me a powerful nostalgia for a world which probably never existed in the first place—though surely someone, somewhere, must have lived some of the time like a character from *The Women*? But at least Ruth Chatterton's cellophane bow is real enough . . . —J.R.T.

SUDDEN FEAR

I get tired of today's heroines; they are for the most part such a weak, whining, snivelling lot, looking for the nearest masculine shoulder to weep on. Was Joan ever like that? No, certainly not. She was always fighting her way up from the wrong side of the tracks, brushing mere men ruthlessly out of her way; even when faced with that classic inducer of hysteria, the assurance that someone was out to kill her, she would take it in her stride, regard it as a challenge to her ingenuity. In *Female on the Beach* it took a lot to drive her screaming into the sea, and anyway it turned out in the end that the real killer was another woman, which of course changes the complexion of things considerably. In *Sudden Fear* she went one better by actually working out a counterplan and putting it, a little confusedly to be sure, into effect; it was the classic of the revolver-in-mink-coat school. It is not as though Joan was the only one. Think of Bette in *Beyond the Forest*. Think of Margaret Lockwood in *The Man in Grey* ("I've lied and cheated my way into this house and nobody, and nothing, is going to stop me"). Think of Valentina Cortese in *Thieves' Highway*: "Say, you think you're plenty tough," remarked the hero imprudently; "I yam toff," she replied, and scored his face with her nails to prove it. It is a vanished breed. —J.R.T.



FILM REVIEWS

THERESE DESQUEYROUX

A WOMAN HESITATES ON THE EDGE of a darkening village square, staring at a figure motionless in the shadows; two girls in white, a dazzling intimation of past innocence, ride their bicycles down a sunny lane; tall trees reach up and up to form an impenetrable barrier against the sky; wood-pigeons struggle under the hunter's net. One need have had no fears about the intractability of Mauriac's novel, for the world of *Thérèse* (Gala) is unmistakably Franju's, a vision of life as a cage against which the prisoner either flutters helplessly or dashes himself in a desperate quest for identity.

The prisoner in this case is Thérèse Desqueyroux (Emmanuèle Riva), a latter-day Madame Bovary brought to trial for the attempted murder of her husband (Philippe Noiret), acquitted through the machinations of his family, and then sequestered in her room for life so that the family honour can recover in peace; and the subject of the film is her attempt to reconstruct her life in order to understand, and make her husband understand, her motives for poisoning him. But as she herself recognises, the complex picture of frustration and longing which she dredges out of the past—her passionate love for her friend Anne; her pride in becoming a woman of property which induces her to marry Bernard; her hatred of his provincial self-satisfaction; her jealousy when Anne finds the romance which has eluded her—all this really explains nothing, for none of it touches Bernard directly. It is only after he returns to the house, horrified to find her physically wasted away by the torment of her months of solitude, and decides to set her free, that she can find a meaning in her act. For Bernard's cosy world has been shattered by the realisation of his own cruelty; and faced for the first time by his self-doubt, Thérèse can now suggest that she poisoned him "Perhaps to see a glimmer of understanding in your eyes." Bernard, though now willing to try, is still incapable of understanding, so he returns home, leaving her to make a life for herself alone in Paris. Alone, but free; for Thérèse has achieved full self-realisation. She knows that she was, at one and the same time, the dreamily romantic girl, and the woman who liked the thought of being wife to a man of property and substance. Her mistake lay in trying to "sacrifice one to the other."

Thérèse's progression in this quest for her identity is marked by three strongly emphasised moods in the film. At the very beginning, as she emerges from the law courts into the empty village square, looks anxiously across to the hostile figure of her father, and is bundled hurriedly into a car, the lengthening shadows, bleak stone buildings and black clothes bring a sombre note which is echoed through all the present action. The setting is the endless pine forests and marshy wastes of the beautiful, desolate Landes, where the lonely houses stand in creaking isolation, the wind howls in the trees, and heavy skies bring stifling heat or driving rain. Against this blackness is set the white of childhood memory; images of blinding clarity, of a happiness too perfect perhaps ever to have existed except as a memory, as Thérèse remembers Anne (Edith Scob), in radiant white, laughing in a sunny lane or striding through a field of waving rye. But the world is neither black nor white; and grey dominates for the first time at the end of the film, in the shots of the Paris streets as Thérèse at last becomes one of the passers-by.

As with all Franju films, the dominant impression is one of strangeness, a feeling of terror shadowed behind the most innocent image. So, when Thérèse, meeting her husband for the first time after the revelation of her crime, asks "Je vous fais peur, Bernard?" and he replies "Non; horreur," there are overtones which irresistibly recall *Les Yeux Sans Visage*, where, as here, the victim becomes the executioner. Over and over again the images of *Thérèse* contain this latent charge of horror: Anne, a tender figure in white, crushes the

life out of a wounded lark with one hand, while gently stroking its feathers with the other; Thérèse opens the window of the room in which she is imprisoned, and a huge tree raises its branches into the sky like a threatening sentinel; Thérèse puts on make-up after her incarceration, preparing to meet the family assembled downstairs, and a sudden change in light turns her face into a livid death-mask.

The astonishing thing is that, in making so completely personal a film, Franju has remained meticulously faithful to Mauriac's novel. Not only the flashback technique, but almost every detail in the film has its origin in the novel—Thérèse's empty hand automatically flicking ash when her cigarettes have been taken away, the gesture with which she kisses her sleeping child's hand before her attempt at suicide, even the episode of the wounded bird. But Franju gives these details a precision and a reverberation which go much deeper than Mauriac. The Catholic Mauriac, for instance, describing Thérèse's indifference when she goes to church and sees at the altar "... an empty space where, between two children, a man in disguise stands muttering, his arms stretched out," evokes simply an emptiness in Thérèse. Franju, cutting the scene out with a scalpel, suspends it in time as a damning indictment of the meaningless ritual of prayer.

Writing about *La Tête contre les Murs*, Godard once noted how a whole scene might be impregnated by a single gesture lasting only two or three seconds: "and this is the secret, or rather one of the secrets, of Franju's art: to direct, to make a film, write a script, is to let the camera look long enough on faces and objects to mark them deeply..." In *Thérèse*, Franju's camera marks out two faces—Anne and Thérèse—the one who has momentarily found happiness

"THERESE DESQUEYROUX". EMMANUELE RIVA AND EDITH SCOB.





AUDREY HEPBURN IN "MY FAIR LADY".

only to lose it and give up the search, and the one who has never found it but never given up. These two images dominate the whole film, and illuminate, in particular, the extraordinary sequence in which Anne accuses Thérèse of trying to separate her from the man she loves, and both girls run through the forest to Jean's house, only to find it empty. The swirling mist cut through by the beam of a torch, the ghostly figure of Anne beating on the door, the dead house ("sépulcre vide") echoing hollowly, are all evoked by Mauriac, but in the novel Thérèse is simply an observer. In the film, the two girls are inextricably linked: Anne is 'the other Thérèse', the one who was sacrificed. The house becomes a sepulchre in a very real sense, for in it Anne's spirit dies. When we next see her, she has been tamed into a true Desqueyroux, ready to marry the man of her family's choice; she lives on only in Thérèse, the new Thérèse of the final scene.

TOM MILNE

MY FAIR LADY

SEVENTY-FIVE PER CENT OF MY FAIR LADY (Warner-Pathé) is production values, but that's probably unavoidable since the musical itself has now become That Well-Known Property. This being so, the film is finally beyond judgment—if it's box-office it's good; and it's sure to be box-office. So it's good.

The treatment can be catalogued, however, even if criticism seems wasted breath. The script remains largely the same. The score is orchestrated rather more lushly than in the stage recording. Cecil Beaton's biggest contribution to the film is his name; the quality of his work is comparatively unimportant—it's always showy, which is enough. The casting is eminently proper: a list which includes Stanley Holloway, Wilfrid Hyde-White, Mona Washbourne and Gladys Cooper is a very solid cast list indeed, and it is unlikely that a better Higgins exists than Rex Harrison. Audrey Hepburn, as Eliza Doolittle, is a more controversial choice. She's not a musical-comedy star (numbers put her over, which is not the best way round). But *My Fair Lady* isn't really any longer simply a musical—it is The Film, made from The Show, so using Hollywood's Princess was a very suitable move. And Harry Stradling's photography shines with award-winning splendour, a monument to Hollywood expertise and six weeks of pre-shooting tests.

It's all sufficiently enjoyable too. One does go 'Ooh!' at the photography, and enough people probably go 'Ooh!' at the costumes. Audrey Hepburn's are certainly effective, if strained, and

she wears them with her usual elegant fragility. No one is likely to gasp at the sets, but the props are good, and George Cukor wisely concentrates on them (the abundance of strange detail makes Eliza's tiny workroom quite the best film set in the picture). Rex Harrison's performance is given full scope, and treated with very perceptive consideration. And Audrey Hepburn is more beautiful and charming than ever, Cukor showing a restraint in his early use of her which makes the impact of her later sequences quite stunning. Some of the second-half close-ups look like a lover's dreams.

Criticism of her performance is pointless. Even in Shaw's original play Eliza was not quite as credible a figure as Cinderella or Galatea, and only the author's earthiness made her seem acceptable. The romanticising of the play has taken this toughness away from the part, and it is now quite impossible to act except as a collection of snippets. Audrey Hepburn hasn't the coarseness, let alone the accent, for the early scenes, but once she reaches civilisation she is very funny and moving.

Criticism of the numbers is more relevant. Hermes Pan's choreography is a bore, but perhaps none of the cast can dance. Cukor doesn't compensate for this inadequacy, and consequently nothing ever quite takes wing. Even 'Get Me to the Church On Time', the best-handled routine, fails to throw its bonnet over the windmill.

But Cukor has never been at ease with the big-money stuff. Either because of the Front Office or because of his own temperament, his large-scale films never quite manage to jell properly: inside every big Cukor film there seems to be a small Cukor film trying to get out. In *My Fair Lady* there are touches all the way through which seem to imply Cukor at work on a piece that will be delicate, elegantly formalised, sensuous, and emotionally ambivalent. For example, from the first lovingly photographed credits of banks and banks of flowers (later echoed in Covent Garden Market), a garden image is repeated to enhance Audrey Hepburn's flowerlike appeal. A clock strikes, Cinderella-like, when Eliza gathers up the money that changes her life. The same clock chimes the next morning, while pedestrians in the market freeze to its strokes in a troubling but never explained scene. Cukor takes up the epithet 'crushed cabbage-leaf' which Higgins throws at Eliza, and makes it into a touching tribute in a very understated 'Wouldn't It Be Lovely' by using a cabbage leaf fan and cabbage leaf confetti as decorations for the number. For 'The Rain in Spain', Eliza's point of no return, we are reminded of Covent Garden by the dark green of her dress and by the violets at her waist. After 'On the Street Where You Live' Freddie is left framed between banks of flowers, to be rediscovered there days later, unmoved, as though turned to stone. At Ascot Beaton-costumed masks, in early Richard Avedon fashion poses, stand staring coldly towards the camera while horses race across the foreground, blurred and weirdly large. Even in 'Get Me to the Church On Time' Stanley Holloway's gusto and the vigour of the number are left to look after themselves, while Cukor, with blurred pans, with slow blocking of frames, and with time-jumping dissolves, keeps the number at a distance and brings out to an unexpected degree its valedictory qualities. These touches go towards making an interesting film—but only twenty-five per cent of the time.

J. H. FENWICK

THE BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ and THE FLAMING YEARS

IT WAS INEVITABLE, I suppose, that Abel Gance should some time return to Napoleon. For, apart from being totally fascinated by the Emperor, Gance often seems to see himself as the French cinema's uncrowned king, with a vast career behind him and a sadder post-war period spent in trying to impose his own kind of flamboyancy and experimental widescreen techniques on a doubting French industry. But when *The Battle of Austerlitz* (Fox) came out in France five years ago, it must have seemed an unexpected return to conservatism, another of those verbose historical charades, with guest stars popping up all over the screen to deliver a few lines and then disappearing for ever, and a booming battle at the end to make the customers feel it was all worth waiting for. In fact, the film has all the hallmarks of a great big bore (even in this heavily cut version, the first half *does* seem pretty interminable); and yet the personality of its creator is there all the time, mixing dross with gold as he has always done.

First of all, there is the characteristic physical opulence: beautifully dressed sets bursting out of the Dyaliscope screen,

silent film lighting (a marvellous use of shadows and highlights, especially in the conspiratorial close-ups), and a weaving camera which never allows the dialogue scenes to remain static for too long. And one sees how Gance cannily overcomes script and budget limitations when, instead of showing the coronation scene, he slowly pans down an intricate model which momentarily seems to be the real thing. In his efforts to crowd in as much tabloid history as possible, Gance allows the characters to proliferate to such an extent that one yearns for a brief respite from the incessant talk. On this occasion, though, he allows no bravura purple patch to interrupt his hero's machinations (Pierre Mondy's Napoleon struts and postures like a cocky gangster), as he insults the English diplomats or waves away the claims of an American inventor who offers him submarines and the like—Orson Welles, no less, with his funny nose make-up and a voice sounding as if it had been recorded in a rain barrel. At this point, it should be noted that the American dubbing of this version really plumbs the depths of inanity, and that the Eastman Colour has that hazy, bluey rinse common to Fox's doctored continental films.

These distractions are less noticeable when Austerlitz actually begins, for there the sound track is drowned in gunfire, neighing horses, wild screams and all the paraphernalia of battle which Gance loves so well. Truth to tell, it is also a bit of a mess, with too many studio close-ups mixed in with the Yugoslav locations and an uncertain sense of geography. Yet one is still carried along by the sheer scope and thrust, the enjoyably grotesque portraits of the opposing generals (Kutuzov seems to be on the verge of a fit all the time) and the grandiose yet simple set-ups, like the overhead shots of horses and gun-carriages floundering over the frozen lake, and the night shots of the battlefield, peppered with camp fires and scurrying figures. After the victory, the celebration. Gance ends his film by having Napoleon and his generals face the camera as the Marseillaise is played straight through, and there is never a hint of the nemesis that was to come.

In *The Flaming Years* (Cinerama), revenge and retribution are uppermost. Written by Dovzhenko soon after the second world war but for various reasons never realised, this saga of Soviet patriotism was taken up by his widow, Yulia Solntseva, who seems to be dedicating her life to making his lost work. And it is, intermittently, a Dovzhenko film, not so much in the vast 70 mm. battle vistas (many Soviet directors are adept in this sort of thing, though few have equalled the river crossing sequence) but in moments of a highly charged poetic imagery peculiar to Dovzhenko's own style—the dream passage down the stream with the hero's body caressed by flowers, or the first sight of the giant statue on the river bank. One doesn't doubt that the whole script is there, but how much would Dovzhenko have discarded or refined on the way? Madame Solntseva, unhappily, makes no distinction: too many scenes are impregnated with a kind of crude Stalinist bombast, so that fervour turns into styleless rhetoric. It is in these moments that the film seems to be calling out for its true master.

JOHN GILLET

KISS ME, STUPID

WHEN KIM NOVAK LOSES her diamanté belly button in *Kiss Me, Stupid* (United Artists) it doesn't mean that the bottom is falling out of Billy Wilder's world. Philosophically speaking, his fundament has been trailing the floor for some time. The result is that when this singularly dispassionate man makes a film without infallible charm stars like Jack Lemmon or Marilyn Monroe, there is an appalled pursing of lips and wrinkling of noses, as though he had made a nasty mistake, like a puppy that isn't quite house-trained.

Wilder, however, knows very well what he is doing, and he does it thoroughly. He is making comedies based on assumptions which a lot of people refuse to share. "He sees the worst in everybody and he sees it funny," claimed George Axelrod. It's not far from the truth, as Wilder himself recognised in a *Playboy* interview. "I don't think I go too far in emphasising their meanness," he said. "I stylise, maybe, but not too much." His touch, however, if not extremely stylised, is extremely personal. He works, in the first place, with farce plots which take for granted weakness, coarseness, passion and vice. In *Kiss Me, Stupid* the principal characters are a singer (Dean Martin) who has to have sex every night or he wakes up the next morning with a terrible headache; a music-teacher/song-composer (Ray Walston) who is insanely jealous of his beautiful wife; and a "cocktail waitress" (Kim Novak) deserted and stranded in an ugly small town, longing to get away but

resigned to staying, "recommended by the bar-tender." It is a complex plot, remotely based on an Italian stage comedy, and it has its climax in the singer bedding with the wife, the composer with the waitress. As a happy ending the composer gets a television plug for his songs, the waitress gets enough money to leave town, and the singer gets back to Hollywood without a headache.

Wilder uses the plot's moral assumptions and doesn't consider them worth making a fuss about. They are an excuse for a comedy, not grounds for a satire, and this total acceptance is more devastating than the most savage attack. He takes no side, preaches no sermon. He just looks. If the result isn't as hilarious as it should ideally be, it does nevertheless have moments of being very funny indeed; and it is always fascinatingly watchable.

The story is unfolded with the clarity of a comic strip, and the resulting coarseness of tone is emphasised still more by the continual cracks ("If it weren't for Venetian blinds it would be curtains for all of us"); by the heavily stressed *double-entendres*; and by the slapstick techniques. There are moments when Wilder seems to be deliberately making this coarseness harsher than usual—he gives the composer some uncommonly snarling lines and pieces of business. There are also continual side effects of snide comment: "If music be the food of love, play on," announces a motto on the wall as the composer lashes himself into jealous frenzy; "Bang, bang," caws a parrot sadly, deprived of its TV Western, as the singer approaches his bed for the night. Yet the comedy isn't all black. The characters are ludicrous and ignoble, but as a corollary they are at times touching—Wilder seems to feel rather sorry for women in particular, and there is a very sad, funny scene where Felicia Farr, as the abominably treated wife, gets drunk in the Belly Button roadhouse and vainly pleads with the juke-box to play her 'Melancholy Baby.'

Other details, too, without losing their toughness, tend to put out tiny little flowers of compensatory sweetness. A very large, very phallic Chianti bottle is given a lot of prominence early on, both for its alcoholic content and for its visual suggestiveness. "Don't throw that away," says the waitress the morning after, half nostalgic and half just thrifty, "There may be a deposit on it." The line echoes with meaning. "Is this your wife? Lucky guy!" remarks Dean Martin when he first enters the musician's house, and sees a dressmaker's dummy there. The final reduction of the female to a limbless, headless torso. But it is this limbless, headless torso which tortures the composer when he is later genuinely lonely.

The happy ending climax is especially double-edged. The townspeople are occupied with their usual evening amusement of watching colour television in a shop window. The composer's song is televised. It's the Big Time. Yet the image on the screen is weirdly insubstantial—Dean Martin's face repeated on lots of television screens, and over all the plate glass window reflecting the happy, impressed faces of the spectators. "I guess the bigger they are, the nicer they are," coos Ray Walston's collaborator. "No questions, remember," says the wife. Wilder usually has an envoi of sorts. "Nobody's perfect," was *Some Like It Hot*; "Hopeless but not serious" was *One, Two, Three*; "No questions" seems suitably deadpan for *Kiss Me, Stupid*.

J. H. FENWICK

"KISS ME, STUPID": FELICIA FARR AND RAY WALSTON.





"THE SCARLET EMPRESS": MARLENE DIETRICH AND JOHN LODGE.

THE SCARLET EMPRESS

ONE OF THE HANDICAPS facing any film historian is the difficulty of seeing an artist's work in the right order. As far as Josef von Sternberg is concerned, younger critics in this country have so far been deprived of his silent films (except for a brief appearance years ago at the NFT of *The Salvation Hunters*), though I have a vague memory of a bad print of *The Last Command*, with Jannings as an aristocratic extra lording it over a fantastically populated film set. (As for *The Sea Gull*, only Chaplin knows why he suppressed it in America, and he's not telling.) At the moment, then, Sternberg remains for us the director of "the Dietrich films" of the early Thirties, from *The Blue Angel* to *The Devil is a Woman*, in which each film became "a mounting hymn to her beauty," to quote a contemporary commentator. This is true in the sense that Sternberg seemed to have discovered an infinite number of ways of exploring the divine features. In reality, however, she only provided the main human-cum-plastic material for her director's grander designs.

Sternberg viewed the cinema at this time as if it was a gigantic canvas, where subtly controlled lighting took the place of brushstrokes and a hovering camera caressed faces and sets as if it too was obsessed by the heady atmosphere. And it is amazing how much Sternberg got away with. Taking over Stroheim's reputation for extravagance, he proceeded to prove his artistic theories by assuming complete control of his productions, personally supervising the lighting and decor (aided by the great Hans Dreier), and even doing some of his own musical arrangements. *The Scarlet Empress* (1934) and *The Devil is a Woman* (1935) belong to a fantasy world out of reach of time. To a New Deal-conscious America they must have seemed the height of extravagant incongruity: today their inspired self-indulgence acts as a reminder of a Hollywood that has gone for ever.

The Scarlet Empress had been unavailable for years, until its recent revival in the invaluable *Vintage Years of Hollywood* series on BBC-2. Ostensibly it is about the marriage of the young and innocent Sophia Frederica to the mad Grand Duke Peter of Russia, and the insurrection which resulted in her becoming the new Empress Catherine. Looking at it today, one is continually puzzled (and delighted) by Sternberg's ambivalent attitudes towards the material. Surely nobody could have doubted that he was sending it up ("those ideas are old-fashioned—this is the eighteenth century" proclaims the ardent, black-wigged Count Alexei to the pouting young Catherine). Yet Sternberg's insolent wit was the last thing commented on at the time. Strange, too, how these comic anachronisms are made to alternate with set-pieces played solely for their dramatic or exotic appeal; all dialogue ceases and Sternberg

constructs a sequence "painted with light" which fully confirms his reputation as one of the cinema's great visual stylists.

The wedding ceremony, for instance, begins with a long track back over a vision of tapestries, candles and chanting monks to close-ups of Catherine and Peter holding candles before them. As the music mounts, Sternberg cuts a little closer and the focus becomes softer; Catherine's face is seen through her veil, at first apprehensive and then more resigned, with tears slowly forming in her eyes. Cut to the court crossing itself, the placing of rings on fingers, then a reverse track up the church and a dissolve to the Empress Elizabeth, triumphant that her match-making has succeeded. The confident bravura of this sequence is equalled in the night encounters between Catherine, Alexei and the randy old Empress. After the candles are ceremoniously blown out in the bedroom, Catherine is instructed to go downstairs to let in the Empress's lover—Alexei. Horrified, she slowly remounts the stairs; and it is her passage through dark shadows and bright pools of light which conveys the moment's emotional stress. Later, when she exacts her revenge on Alexei, the face is seen again through a veil, used at first to emphasise her sensuality and then, as the lighting hardens, to make her appear cold and unyielding.

These episodes rely mainly on a static camera and highly charged close-ups, but Sternberg indulges in sweeping camera movements when he needs to show his characters dwarfed by their nightmarish Byzantine surroundings. The now famous low tracking shot along a hideously loaded supper table is followed by the same movement in reverse at a slightly higher angle, to reveal the equally heavily-laden diners and the background details of the set. His camera is continually tracking the ladies-in-waiting, rushing about the palace, or following Dietrich in motion, inspecting the guard or gliding across the exquisitely lit garden set into the arms of an unexpected lover ("tonight you are fortunate—very fortunate").

Dietrich's sweetly accented delivery makes the most of both good and bad lines, as she prattles on about telling her mother everything, as Concha does in *The Devil is a Woman* (another private Sternberg joke, no doubt), and progresses from cooing innocent to revenge-seeking mistress. Other characters fare less well, and the fact that the film becomes a little lethargic in the middle may be due to Sternberg's curiously monotonous direction of the dialogue, as if the actors were being dubbed into American. Least successful of all are Louise Dresser as the old Empress, and Sam Jaffe as a gibbering Duke Peter who looks unnervingly like Harpo Marx. Sternberg is supposed to have thought of the Empress as a fishwife, but it is all too raucous and calculated for comfort. The film's portrait of a harsh, hypocritical Court looks artlessly naive by comparison with the cynical inventions of Stroheim or Lubitsch. They may not have had all the experience of middle European high life that they claimed, yet they had a more genuine and ingrained sophistication which protected them against some of the traps Sternberg falls into.

Neither of these directors, however, could have surpassed *The Scarlet Empress's* grand finale, with its clamour of trumpets and bells (in an enthusiastic flurry of Sternberg's favourite lap-dissolves), Dietrich stomping about the palace in a hussar's outfit and *The Ride of the Valkyries* on the soundtrack. Here, in the film's most strikingly assembled sequence, mad Peter is quickly despatched behind a huge black cross, the horsemen charge up the stairs and into the throne-room, and Sternberg's camera wings up to a final exultant close-up of Catherine, now looking as pop-eyed as the Grand Duke himself. After this, it would be churlish to ask for more.

JOHN GILLET

In Brief

RAVEN'S END (*Connoisseur*) is a near neo-realist glimpse of a fledgling writer's life in a working class district of Malmö in 1936. Written as well as directed by the young Swedish film-maker Bo Widerberg, it is the kind of thoroughly personal film with which the audience is at liberty to feel no particular emotional involvement. Primarily neither a protest against social conditions nor a cry from the heart, it is simply, and accurately as regards the detail, accounting for something that once existed and exists no more. I think that if one is to like the film—like it, that is, apart from admiring its obvious integrity—the final image gives a fair indication of the way one is to take it. A child under an umbrella is shown skipping across the drab tenement square that the young writer, Anders (Thommy Berggren), is leaving for ever. The shot goes into slow motion, and finally freezes on the screen. It is already in the past, a memory like everything that has gone before. The Italian neo-realists were

making films in the Forties about conditions in the Forties; Bo Widerberg is making a film in the Sixties about life in the Thirties; merely to mention this distinction is to draw attention to the most important thing about his film. *Raven's End* comes filtering through the memory. One could equally take one's cue from the soft-focus photography, the recurrent white haze of net curtains in the tenement flat, the presentation of significant events as a series of apparently disconnected images or incidents, even, for that matter, the choice of material shot.

The sequence which perhaps best illustrates Widerberg's way of telling his story by means of those isolated moments that linger longest in the mind, is the one surrounding the death of the little boy Kjell-Åke, whom we last see racing excitedly up an escalator with Anders and his girl-friend Elsie. There follows a charmingly natural scene in which the child's small bespectacled sister playfully informs Anders that Kjell-Åke has a stomach-ache. An ambulance, seen in long shot, arrives and departs. Widerberg cuts to an old woman singing dementedly at her window high up in the brick tenement; her weird chant mingles with street noises, the swelling sound of bird song, and finally the tolling bells that overlap into the rain-soaked funeral scene, which culminates with Anders saying "I'll write a book about you, Kjell-Åke."

In the direction of the actors, particularly the father (Keve Hjelm) who is a self-taught expert on cognacs, cigars and other symbols of the high life he has never known, Widerberg's touch is light. Yet after the infectiously joyous scene when Anders tells his parents that a Stockholm publisher is interested in his novel, the film is never quite as good again. *Raven's End*, regarded not just as a place but also as a sort of spiritual suicide, begins to close in a little too inexorably. The love affair with Elsie is seen only in the depressing light of its own aftermath (Elsie's pregnancy, and Anders' abandonment of her to save himself). His sad, hard-working mother gives Anders a harrowing explanation for her single act of unfaithfulness towards her husband. Anders attacks his alcoholic father for not helping him to find a way out of the trap in which he finds himself. A senile neighbour cuts down the lilac tree that was probably the only thing he loved. The father, who has felt too good for any job he ever had, is reduced to wearing a sandwich-board. But then, to re-establish a kind of balance, there comes the final shot. *Raven's End* is in the past, and this is simply one man's time-compressed and mounting claustrophobic recollection of it.—ELIZABETH SUSSEX

YOUNG CASSIDY (M-G-M). "The film," said O'Casey, "is a sword without a blade, a banner without a staff, an arrow without a head." Unhappily, *Young Cassidy* helps to prove his point. Based on the middle section of his discursive six volume autobiography, it covers the time when he was earning a meagre living as a labourer and beginning to write. It ends, after *The Plough and the Stars* riots at the Abbey, with his embarkation for voluntary exile in England, in 1926. The script, by the late John Whiting, is intelligent and workable. Its incidents are well chosen and its dialogue, often original O'Casey, strikes the right note without lapsing into stage Irishry. It also conspicuously evades all the political and religious issues of the period, but that, no doubt, was part of the brief. John Ford prepared the film, but left after a few weeks shooting, and it is profitless to speculate on what he might have made of it. One can only be sure that he would have driven the narrative along with more speed and coherence than Jack Cardiff, who took over the direction. Cardiff has done a respectful and lifeless job, showing no imaginative sympathy with the characters and little historical sense. Even the most superficial meaning of some of the sequences is obscured by his dogged and prosaic literalness.

O'Casey's early plays were born out of the acute misery and deprivation of his youth. Though they glow with humour and compassion, their driving force was rage. A blazing fury, directed not only at the English, but at the faults and follies of the Irish themselves, and at the whole structure of a society that tolerated so much injustice and indignity. He put on to the stage all the dirt and degradation of the Dublin slums, but he transfigured it into the stuff of tragedy. This was the work that set the mob howling at his heels, and this is the material that the film has turned to favour and to prettiness. Flatly photographed in sugary colour and perpetual sunshine, modern Dublin gleams like a tourist poster—a preposterously unlikely city to have fathered such a son. The studio interiors are almost as incongruous and all too obviously the pride of the Art Department. A riot during the 1911 transport strike has some moments of real terror, and there is a pub brawl that has a Fordian gusto; otherwise almost the only moment of life is provided by Donal Donnelly in a two-minute appearance as a rapacious undertaker's man. He brings with him a sudden cold whiff of the

gutter. The rest is a parade of distinguished English players doing their set pieces with paralysing gentility. It seems as remote from the fierce protesting humanity of O'Casey (whose relation to the Cassidy of the title is never explained) as it is from the timeless enthusiasm of Ford. The cinema was unable to do O'Casey justice in his lifetime and now it has failed to make him a worthy memorial.

BRENDA DAVIES

FAIL SAFE (BLC/Columbia). Competition between *Dr. Strangelove* and *Fail Safe* began at a London press conference, when Stanley Kubrick announced (but apparently didn't go through with) a suit for plagiarism. It ends finally on the screen of the Columbia, with a knock-down victory for the Kubrick film. *Fail Safe* is the straight man's *Strangelove*, shorn of the capers and extravagance, and also of the shudder of fear. Kubrick worked on the principle that the unimaginable can only be looked at directly through the smoked glasses of comedy. Sidney Lumet's film, based on a clumsy but technically gripping best-seller, is a synthetic compound of suspense (will the Vindicator bombers reach Moscow?), clumping human interest (the colonel who breaks down, apparently because his mother is a tenement drunk), and nuclear war games. There is a kind of fascination in the mad logic which converts the annihilation of Moscow and New York almost to the level of an exchange of queens at chess. This could only really strike home, however, if the film had gone all out to stress it, rather than assuming that fearful decisions can be taken in full melodramatic stride, provided that it is Henry Fonda who makes them, in the company only of a translator, a telephone, and a bare white wall. Fonda's President is one of his sterling performances, its conviction deriving less, perhaps, from anything in the acting here than from a quarter of a century of helping movies out of similarly tight spots. His scenes have a moral tension, which the film finally betrays dismally when it switches its attention to solving the uninteresting conundrum of a general's recurring nightmare. Sidney Lumet gives the impression of directing the script rather than the picture—which is to say that, in allowing every talkative scene much the same portentous gloom, he falls into some early pitfalls (the Washington party introduction to the nuclear strategist) from which he later has difficulty in extricating himself. There are some lively war-room details, with the usual paraphernalia of maps, sealed orders, hot lines, and blips on charts; and a moment on the telephone, between an American general and his Russian opposite number, when the film suddenly gets the feeling right, and the sense of insane inevitability breaks through as it fails to do during the lengthier homilies on men and machines. But the odd thing about *Fail Safe*, in its way rather encouraging, is how dated it looks. The mood is that of two years ago, of Kennedy and Khrushchev, the Cuba crisis, the lonely intimacies of power. We are no longer, somehow, quite in that world.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

LA BONNE SOUPE (Fox) is an all-star but otherwise rather pinchpenny version of the Félicien Marceau play; it's impossible not to like it because Marie Bell and Annie Girardot are so exactly right for the job. Coral Browne did it a few years ago in the West End, and she too made the irrepressible tart's progress from genteel poverty to millionaire's yacht a sympathetic and extremely funny affair. I suspect that the film, casually directed by Robert Thomas, has gained in astringency and visual seediness. Pathos, quite rightly, gets short shrift: when Marie-Paule's one true love stops a bullet during a robbery, Annie Girardot lets out a peasant howl of grief, then coolly sets about trapping a husband to fend for her unborn child by stealing a little girl's ticket to a Red Cross beano. She exchanges her riotously vulgar rooms and flats (the decor has to be seen to be believed) for a life of vapid domesticity with a well-meaning biscuit manufacturer, dressing, doing accounts and doling out lentil soup like a boarding-house châtelaine. After twenty years of it, during which the leading part has passed from Madame Girardot to Madame Bell, the long-delayed explosion has a properly farcical odium. Scorching along to her son-in-law to flay him for betraying her daughter, she is found by her nearest and dearest sprawling in unmistakable submission to carnal nostalgia. Though Bernard Blier, Daniel Gélin and Raymond Pellegrin are all excellent, the ladies make the film. With her raucous laugh, Swanson hand-signals, dark Bankhead hair, dancing Crawford legs and proudly naked back and shoulders, Marie Bell is a sort of multiple tribute to ageless professionalism. Annie Girardot displays an unexpected flair for rough, tough comedy which confirms her high standing among the Moreau generation of French actresses. And it's nice to see Jane Marken again in her old part of a watchful, motherly Madam.

PETER JOHN DYER

FILM CLIPS

I ALWAYS ENJOY LISTENING to Mr. John Trevelyan talking about the British Board of Film Censors and its work. He is so convincing, so extraordinarily ready with a smooth, if not always a soft, answer to any question or objection. I suspect that one of his chief gifts, in fact, is that so signally lacking in, for instance, most of the publicity agents one knows: the ability to calculate exactly the sort of thing which his hearers are most likely to welcome hearing. To someone who apparently wanted a strong moral line taken, I am sure he would be able in all sincerity to take a strong moral line. To me, on the other hand, when I went along to ask him whether he was conscious of any change of policy in the last couple of years, and whether the recent refusal of certificates to three notable Hollywood films—*Lady In a Cage*, *Shock Treatment* and *Shock Corridor*—betokened anything, he is equally capable, with equal sincerity, of appreciating all objections before they are made, and appealing instead to the knowledge of the practical politics of things which we share as men of the world.

In these terms his chief defence for the whole business of censorship as carried out by the B.B.F.C. is that, irritating though it may be, and hard to justify though some of its decisions may be, some form of censorship is inevitable in our society, and at least it is less objectionable than State censorship. State censorship in some form, Mr. Trevelyan thinks, would be inevitable if the whole question of film censorship became a real public issue and Parliament was pressed to make changes in its administration. He therefore conceives it as one of the duties of the Board at present to avoid censure in any form, and for that matter to avoid praise ("As soon as we are praised anywhere in the press for our intelligence in letting something through uncut, some local authority somewhere thinks 'Aha, so they're passing dirty films now; we'll have a look at that,' and then the harm is done"). In fact, really the Board wants to avoid any remark at all. So, whenever one raises any particular question of why what was cut in which film, the answer is nearly always that you or I, as men of the world, might not object to it, but that someone, somewhere would, that they would write to the papers or their M.P., and the Board would come in for criticism.

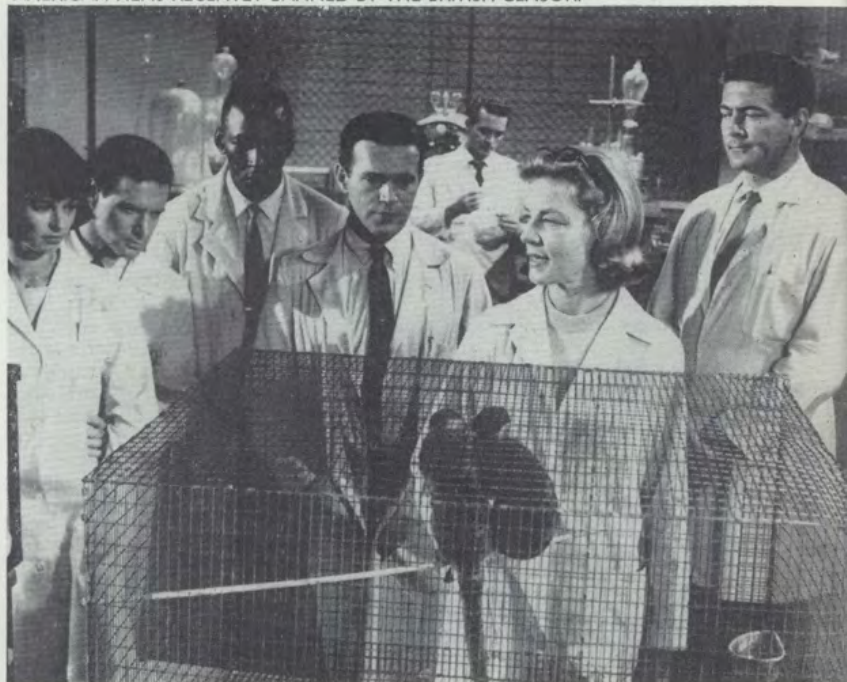
This would seem to suggest that, if they are to avoid criticism from everyone who ever wrote to a newspaper, they

would have to do a pretty sizeable amount of cutting, but Mr. Trevelyan denies it. The Board, he says, keeps up with the changing standards of ordinary, reasonable people in these matters (though of course always somewhat on the safe side, so as to avoid controversy). It is inclined to be more indulgent with serious, art-type films which have worthy intentions and do what they do with—"I don't like the word, because it's so difficult to define exactly what one means by it, but what other can one use?—integrity." In any case, if you cut a film by Bergman or Antonioni or Buñuel, you get criticism from the classy papers, which is as bad as, if not worse than, the sort of criticism you get from the populars if you don't. Obviously it is best, if you cannot avoid running into criticism somehow, at least to make sure that hostility from one quarter is balanced by support from another.

Hence, I suppose, the aspect of the Board's work which I find most irritating and disturbing: a sort of snobbery which encourages a reverent approach to art or pseudo-art and a corresponding tendency to penalise 'mere' entertainment. If you cut *The Silence* too much people are going to complain, while a lot of the sort of people who would complain if you didn't will never get to see it. On the other hand the intellectual weeklies are not going to bother very much if you snip out chunks of saucy dialogue from *Under the Yum Yum Tree*, even though it got an X certificate; and you can cut horror films with impunity because they are seldom press-shown and many of the snootier papers disapprove of them anyway.

Personally, I have a passion for horror films and a weakness for bedroom farce, and I object to going along to *The Spectre* or *Curse of the Living Corpse* or *Under the Yum Yum Tree* only to find the censor saying to me, in effect, 'Even though you are an adult and are attending an entertainment reserved for adults, there are some things from which I feel it is my duty to shield you, so they have been cut.' Mr. Trevelyan assures me that this is not the case at all: "We are not censors of public morals or public taste at all; how could we be? But you must remember that *you* would not object to uncut horror films or sex comedies because you like them. On the other hand people who do not like that sort of entertainment—and there are a lot; the British people do not like dirty films, and they are never popular—" [Mr. Trevelyan ignored my suggestion that if they were so unpopular it seemed rather a waste of time

LAUREN BACALL IN DENIS SANDERS'S "SHOCK TREATMENT", ONE OF THE AMERICAN FILMS RECENTLY BANNED BY THE BRITISH CENSOR.



going to so much trouble to protect people from them]—"people who do not like that sort of entertainment will complain if it is allowed. They will hold us responsible if we let it through untouched. That is the sort of criticism we just cannot afford to bring on ourselves, unless we feel that it is in the cause of something culturally worthwhile and that we shall have the support of the intelligent minority in what we do." I am cursed enough to object even to the idea that people who would never dream of going to an X certificate horror film themselves can, simply by the power of their say-so, prevent me from seeing it unspoiled either. But an hour with Mr. Trevelyan, and he has me almost convinced, until I am out in the street again, that it is my democratic duty to accept the rule of this vocal minority for the good of the nation at large, which would totter on the brink of moral collapse if the B.B.F.C. ceased to function.

Mr. Trevelyan even agrees, surprisingly, that the sort of cutting done by the Board sometimes makes matters worse instead of better. Claire Bloom remarked recently in a newspaper interview that *The Chapman Report* looked much dirtier in the British version, because when a relatively harmless embrace was evidently cut it left the audience open to an infinitude of inflammatory speculation about what could possibly have happened in the section removed. Mr. Trevelyan recognises this possibility, but explains that this is after all a sophisticated view. If a sequence culminated in a perfectly matter-of-fact and totally unsuggestive bit of nudity, this nudity would nevertheless offend somebody, and there would be complaints. Cut it out and nobody will complain, even if the effect is considerably more suggestive. But of course there are sometimes other ways out of such dilemmas: I expressed surprise that, all things considered, the lines in *Topkapi* in which Melina Mercouri asks if the hero does not mind her being a nymphomaniac, and her extremely suggestive reactions to the wrestling contest, had been left in a U-certificate film. Mr. Trevelyan permitted himself a little secret smile. "Sometimes the thing that leaves us least open to complaint is to do nothing to draw attention to something which is in theory objectionable. We have not had a single remark in the press, not a single letter or phone call of complaint about that. We're not entirely stupid, you know..."

AS TO THE LATEST BATCH of films to be banned, they are, as everybody is probably aware by now, two of the cycle of mental hospital films—the third, *Borderlines*, ex *The Caretakers*, was apparently passed with cuts, but has not yet turned up—and the Olivia de Havilland vehicle *Lady in a Cage*. *Shock Corridor*, which I have seen, and *Shock Treatment*, which I haven't, both apparently take too sensational a view of life and treatment in mental hospitals for the censors to look upon them with favour, since although both are primarily thrillers it is felt that if people with relatives or friends in mental hospitals take offence or fright the censors will be blamed. *Lady in a Cage* is quite a different matter: Mr. Trevelyan describes it as a piece of sheer sadistic sensationalism, which even many people in Hollywood disapprove of and think should never have been made (no doubt particularly those who know it has already made a 500 or 600 per cent profit and wish they had thought of it first). In it Olivia de Havilland is a rich, pampered widow, crippled, and over-possessive about her son, who slams out of the house at the beginning of the film. She is just making her way upstairs in a lift—one of those open affairs with a panoramic outlook over hall and living area—when it grinds unmovably to a halt. Next, a group of wild teenagers invades the house, led by a sadistic brute with homicidal tendencies and a highly developed taste for rape. Well, no, perhaps it doesn't sound exactly like "a critics' picture", but I must say it does sound

to me rather promising. In Paris, I am told, they keep proffering it on the bill-boards and then putting on super-productions by Joe Levine instead. But no doubt with any luck it will be possible sooner or later for me to see it over there without the B.B.F.C. running into embarrassment on my account. Let no one say that I am not the soul of reasonableness in such matters...

* * *

HOLLYWOOD DIRECTORS WHO ARE DISCOVERED by way-out French critics are usually delighted (naturally) and somewhat intimidated by this flattering attention. Few, anyway, can altogether resist the temptation to try to live up to their new-found status as film thinkers, if questioned about it by writers from the more informed newspapers and magazines. Jacques Tourneur, though, is a charming exception to this rule—perhaps because, being of French origin himself and son of a famous silent director, Maurice Tourneur, he knows more exactly than most with just how big a pinch of salt to take the elaborate intellectual games some French writers have been playing with his slightest films.

Certainly, when I met him recently in the midst of shooting his latest film *City in the Sea*, he seemed to have a view of his own work coolly unaffected by anything his wilder commentators have said. Mention of *The Fearmakers*, for example, brought forth an unequivocal, "You know, that was a terrible film; I think it's just about the worst I've ever made." But then in general—and how refreshing it is these days to hear someone take this line without affectation—Mr. Tourneur makes no bones about regarding himself as "a journeyman filmmaker, nothing more." "I make films," he says, "because it is my métier; I know how to do it, and I can do a good job on pretty well anything I am given. What I look for when I am sent a script is something which works, or which it seems can be made to work, in its own terms. Of course if I have time I like to work on the script to get it as close as possible to full working order, but if not, well, I just do the best I can while I am actually directing. I don't have any particular inclination to one sort of film rather than another, and in my time I think I've made practically every sort except a musical."



MYLENE DEMONGEOT AND STEVE REEVES IN JACQUES TOURNEUR'S "THE GIANT OF MARATHON".

What, not even any special feeling for the horror film? He smiled, "Well, yes, I must admit that I do particularly enjoy fantasy. It gives one a chance to do new things, to try to be a little more subtle than almost any other sort of commercial film allows. And of course I did start with fantasy, in the films I made with Val Lewton: *The Cat People*, *Leopard Man*, *I Walked with a Zombie* (What a title! It's one of my films that I like best, all except that title). Lewton, you know, was a really extraordinary man: he had real culture and intelligence, and that made him very difficult for Hollywood to understand and accept, though it is more of a pushover for fake culture and pseudo-intelligence than anywhere else in the world. Val Lewton was a long and close friend of mine, and I think his early death was a terrible loss to Hollywood. He had everything that John Houseman had, and I think would have done more than Houseman has ever done."

We talked about other films, and I mentioned remembering with particular pleasure *Stars in My Crown*. Mr. Tourneur was evidently delighted. "You know, I think you must be about the only person in the world who has ever seen that film. It's my own favourite of all the films I have ever made, and it went for absolutely nothing; it was hardly shown at all in the States, and I didn't know it had been anywhere else. But I always think of it as my best film. One of these days I would like just once to choose a story for myself, have it

scripted as I want it, and make it entirely in my own way, just to show that I could. Perhaps some time I will. But meanwhile I'm happy as I am . . ."

ANGLO AMALGAMATED's legal battle with Twentieth Century-Fox over the posters for *Carry on Cleo* deserves a footnote. Fox claimed that the design of Anglo's posters, showing Kenneth Williams, Sid James and Amanda Barrie in the same poses, more or less, and against the same gilt and plush background as you-know-who on the *Cleopatra* posters, was plagiarism, while Anglo (who lost the case) said it was parody. *The Times* Law Report was, as ever, rather splendid on the subject: there was a lot of earnest talk about the creative and imaginative contribution of the various artists responsible, and a particularly odd note was struck by the general assumption that the original poster would have a fresh and exciting new impact when *Cleopatra* finally went on general release, provided, of course, that the plagiarism/parody was not first permitted to blunt it. Perhaps we film-orientated nuts live in a dream world, but can there really be anyone, however far-flung, to whom that original poster is not as familiar as "Bubbles" was to our grandparents? Still, at least the judge did manage to refrain from hitting the front pages by enquiring "Who is Elizabeth Taylor?"

ARKADIN

BOOK REVIEWS

FILM WORLD, by Ivor Montagu. Illustrated. (Penguin Books, 6s.)

"... EITHER FOR TRAGEDY, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited . . ."
—Shakespeare.

Mr. Montagu defines the scope of his 327-page study in his preface:

This booklet is really an essay on the nature of films, on the relation of what they do to the total process of reality from which they abstract, on the relation of their own nature to the effects they achieve, on the relation of these effects and of their own physical substance to the role they have played in commerce and in society. If we can understand all this rightly, we shall be able to perceive more clearly the why of cinema past, the possibilities of cinema present, the certainties of cinema future. In the pursuit of this goal, he divides his booklet into four separate parts: 1. Film as Science; 2. Film as Art; 3. Film as Commodity; and 4. Film as Vehicle. The first section is largely concerned with definitions, with setting things straight. We learn that film is:

An appearance of continuous motion created in the mind of the observer by presentation of a series of motionless images in rapid sequence above the fusion frequency of human vision, where the series of images has been arranged in an appropriate sequence on a continuous band . . . (p. 16)
and that the relationship between sound and image has two possibilities:

This is irrespective of whether the association is mechanical (i.e. by 'sound film') or not (i.e. by 'silent film'). These relation-

ships are either natural (i.e. based on a causal relationship) or arbitrary (selected for a particular effect). Instances of the one relationship are: in 'sound film', speech associated with the image of the uttering lips, in 'silent film' clashing coco-nut shells associated with galloping hooves; of the other—in 'sound film', speech associated with the expression of the listener's face, in 'silent film', music. (p. 71)

This Aristotelian impulse to classify and define pervades the entire study, turning the second section into a catalogue of techniques supposedly characteristic of the Film as Art. The time-exhausted literary analogies are reiterated ("the shot is the word; the scene or sequence is the phrase or sentence . . ."), as are many of the Eisenstein and Pudovkin analyses of the effects they were excited to achieve. In fact, Mr. Montagu's own excitement for the Film as Art has clearly been confined to the Soviet silent cinema. Throughout this section, except for the stills, there is no evidence of any knowledge of the modern cinema at all. Except for the Soviet references, all his examples are hypothetical, his conclusions theoretical. After a detailed discussion of the various possibilities of filming a cigarette, we read:

In an earlier section we examined the graphic requirements of the shot based on considerations of graphic composition directing interest to a particular focal point; relevant here is that there are just as many graphic requirements based on the content itself, and that the degree to which both sets of requirements are borne in mind will govern the force of impact of the scene. (p. 140)

And so the argument goes on.

Had it not been for this review, by now I should have laid the book down, tucking it away in that dark corner of my library where I keep all the other still-born studies of the art of the film. But this would have been a mistake; for in the next section, Mr. Montagu's writing comes alive. When discussing Film as Commodity, he is no longer theoretical, and his examples are precise. He is passionately opposed to the cultural futilities of the production set-up in this country and to the domination on the circuits of the American film. Having actually worked in film production, he understands the business; and his old Soviet allegiances make him a sharp yet sober critic of our relentlessly commercial ways. Here, even the hypothetical examples of the previous section begin to make sense. It is as if Mr. Montagu feels that, had conditions been different, he might have been able to make films himself.

The final section, Film as Vehicle, is neither theoretical nor precise. It is simply infuriating. Under the general cover of Realism (while offering, by the way, a good critique of Flaherty), Mr. Montagu openly declares his distaste for the modern cinema, a distaste based on a failure to understand. Antonioni and Resnais are impatiently dismissed; Godard's name (like Fellini's earlier) is

relegated to a footnote; Truffaut's to just one item in a list; Bergman's to a parenthesis (and even then, it is mis-spelled).

A curious experience. With its little epigraphs that announce each new chapter and its opening anecdote set at High Table in Trinity College, Cambridge, there is the atmosphere of port wine throughout the book, of an aristocratic dalliance with this most proletarian of the arts. Yet, at the same time, there is a cultural wisdom buried within it, a wisdom based on the recognition that things need not have been as they are, that works of art are a social product, and that societies can be changed. Finally, there is a sadness, with so little new light on cinema past, no actual observation of cinema present, and not a hint of any certainty for cinema future. Except for the hope of a viable third circuit, or partial nationalisation, his Envoi leads us to a dead end.

PETER HARCOURT

OM FILMEN: Articles and Interviews, by Carl Th. Dreyer. Edited by Erik Ulrichsen. (Gyldendal, Copenhagen. 9.75 Danish Crowns, paper covers.)

FIRE FILM, by Carl Th. Dreyer. Edited by Ole Storm. (Gyldendal, Copenhagen. 42.50 Danish Crowns, paper covers.)

DURING HIS 46 YEARS IN FILMS, Carl Theodor Dreyer has made only 14 features and eight shorts. In the lengthy periods between films, caused by his difficulties in finding producers who would allow him the freedom he demanded, he has usually written film scripts—many of which have never been filmed—and journalism. In fact, journalism led him into films, when he was assigned to write a series of articles about the Danish film industry, went to watch the filming of a scene in which a dancer was to be shot out of an enormous bottle, and suggested an ending for the film to the producers. For the occasion of his 70th birthday, in 1959, the Danish film and theatre critic Erik Ulrichsen edited a collection of Dreyer's articles. It is this collection, in a slightly expanded form, which has recently been reprinted as a paperback for his 75th birthday. *Om Filmen* starts off with a long article about Swedish films, first published in 1920, and ends with an *in memoriam* to Ebbe Neergaard, Dreyer's biographer, which dates from 1960.

In an article about talkies, first printed in 1933, Dreyer wrote that he considered the difference between theatre and films to be that between portraying and being. In 1955 he wrote that he did not believe in revolution but in evolution, the small steps forward. The collection includes a Danish radio interview, in which he describes how and when he first got the idea for filming Kaj Munk's *Ordet*, and how he went about adapting the play. In several of his articles, Dreyer emphasised his view that it was not only desirable but necessary for the director to take part in the writing of the screenplay, while the shooting script should be the work of the director alone. He felt that it was usually more advisable to adapt a novel or play, which had already been carefully composed, rather than to have a script specially written.

By and large, his own screenplays have taken form in the manner he suggests. All of his features have been adaptations; and with the exception of *Ordet*, none of his screenplays has been very faithful to the original. Recently, following a suggestion by an Italian publisher, Dreyer has published the scripts of what he considers to be his four best features: *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, *Vampyr*, *Day of Wrath* and *Ordet*.

Dreyer deals with the relationship between the individual and the group, with what happens to those who are different—the highly talented, the truly religious, the passionate lover, the obsessed. At the core of his vision is the subject of what freedom the individual may or may not have. Technically the scripts are varied. The *Jeanne d'Arc* screenplay is made up of long descriptive passages broken by dialogue or changes of scene. Ole Storm, the Danish critic who has edited the volume, gives a handful of illustrations of the short direction notes Dreyer wrote alongside his manuscript. Regrettably, only these few illustrations are included in the volume. The text of *Day of Wrath* indicates fairly clearly where Dreyer planned to set up his camera and the types of effects for which he was striving, information which is not given in the scripts for *Jeanne d'Arc* and *Vampyr*. At the same time, the descriptive passages in *Day of Wrath* are much less elaborate, and are presented from the point of view of 'We . . .', which is apparently synonymous with the camera (the audience). In three of the four screenplays, Dreyer has listed the number of cuts. The figures are worth noting: *Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (219), *Day of Wrath* (676) and *Ordet* (69).

FREDERIC FLEISHER

THE BARRYMORES, by Hollis Alpert. Illustrated. (W. H. Allen, 36s.)

THE BARRYMORES HAVE, to put it mildly, been fairly well written up already by biographers and critics, gossip columnists and other commentators on the sidelines of show business; as a family they must also hold some kind of record for the amount that they have published about themselves. Autobiographical studies emanating from the immediate family circle include Ethel's *Memories*, Lionel's *We Barrymores*, John's *Confessions of an Actor*, John's second wife Michael Strange's *Who Tells Me True*, their daughter Diana's *Too Much, Too Soon* and John's fourth wife Elaine's *All My Sins Remembered*—all books that Mr. Hollis Alpert, the circumspect film critic of the *Saturday Review*, has had occasion to consult in the preparation of his almost 400 page biography, which aims to present "as a unity" the story of Ethel, Lionel and John. The talent and the intemperance, the profligacy (all the Barrymores contrived to run through fortunes and die penniless) and the pride (rather than sit in a second tier box, Ethel once walked out of a concert given by her favourite Toscanini) provide the kind of human interest material that could scarcely in an age of mass communication have been suppressed. Products of the pre-Hollywood "star system" created in the theatre by Charles Frohman, the Barrymores were almost archetypal stars. Ethel, living her private life very much in the public eye as early as the beginning of this century, was, for instance, simultaneously chafing at the idea "that her prominence was ascribed more to something called 'personality', and later to 'glamour' than to great acting talent." John, "the great profile," with his gargantuan talent and his equally arresting instinct for self-destruction, for years paraded a kind of death wish that seems now to have presaged another, not unfamiliar, pattern in the annals of Hollywood. When, according to Mr. Alpert, Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur tried to dissuade the desperately ill actor from embarking on a fourth marriage, the prelude to which was already public property, "John calmly turned aside their arguments. 'Gentlemen,' he told them, 'you are talking to a man who is about to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel.'"

As regards the cinema, the taciturn Lionel, who disliked the stage and who emerges as perhaps the least fascinating of this essentially theatrical family, is the most concerned. Around 1911 he "happened to meet a chap at lunch whose name was D. W. Griffith," with whom after making a few one-reelers he went to Hollywood. Some seventeen years later, when he was pushing fifty and no longer playing leading roles, Lionel with his rich, rolling voice had good reason to welcome the coming of sound. At this period he also turned his hand to directing, "discovered" Clark Gable and apparently laid claim to having improvised the first movable "mike boom." Mr. Alpert writes in readable journalese ideally suited to the recital of amusing anecdotes (of which there are a fair number), but in common with his attempt to explain John Barrymore in terms of pop psychiatry, a little too facile to give the darker passages much weight. This is a book to read only once at a fairly rapid pace; if one flips back through it one begins to want more dates (there are none accompanying the lists of plays and films included in the index) and a family tree and the precise acknowledgment of specific sources. One wants, in fact, something much more fully documented than Mr. Alpert provides.

ELIZABETH SUSSEX

BOOKS RECEIVED

AGEE ON FILM, VOLUME TWO. (Peter Owen, 50s.)

ARAB CULTURE AND CINEMA. (Arab Film and Television Centre, Beirut.)

THE BALCONY. By Jean Genet. (Faber and Faber, 5s.)

JEAN COCTEAU. By René Gilson. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 7.10 Fr.)

A DICTIONARY OF THE CINEMA. By Peter Graham. (Tantivy Press, 8s. 6d.)

DISCRIMINATION AND POPULAR CULTURE. Edited by Denys Thompson. (Penguin Books, 4s.)

FILM: THE CREATIVE PROCESS. By John Howard Lawson. (W. H. Allen, 42s.)

THE IMMEDIATE EXPERIENCE. By Robert Warshow. (Anchor Books, \$1.25.)

LOUIS LUMIERE. By Georges Sadoul. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 7.10 Fr.)

F. W. MURNAU. By Lotte H. Eisner. (Le Terrain Vague/Rodney Books, 45s.)

TWENTY YEARS A-GROWING. By Dylan Thomas. (Dent, 12s. 6d.)

WEST WIND. By Mel Heimer. (Muller, 25s.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Franju or Godard?

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—Reading the last issue of two of SIGHT AND SOUND has been so irritating that I am thinking of cancelling my subscription; and I would like to explain why.

A couple of years ago a footnote in Freddy Buache's excellent monograph on Franju steered me indirectly to Ado Kyrrou's *Surréalisme au Cinéma*, which now seems to me quite simply the best book there is on the cinema; a reference by Kyrrou interested me in *Positif*; and last summer, on a visit to France, I was able to acquaint myself not only with *Positif* but also with *Midi-Minuit Fantastique* and *Présence du Cinéma*. Having earlier chanced upon Henri Jeanson's survey of the Nouvelle Vague in *Crapouillot 60*, I had realised with pleasure that it was possible for a French critic to be shrewdly and refreshingly irreverent about a good many of the Nouvelle Vague reputations without being in the least 'reactionary'; but it was clear that Jeanson was lone-wolfing. What I had entirely failed to gather from your own journal was the vitality and seriousness of the French journals and critics that are out of sympathy with the *Cahiers du Cinéma* side of the Nouvelle Vague.

I suppose that were I now to search through my back numbers I would come across an occasional reference to the journals I have mentioned. But my experience would seem to show that they are not of a sort to arrest the mind, let alone make one wish to explore further. The audible critical dialogue in SIGHT AND SOUND has been with *Cahiers* alone, even in areas where the names of its rivals cry out to be mentioned. Arkadin, for instance, whose "Film Clips" has been for me the most consistently pleasurable and profitable feature of your journal, writes as if he were merely an amiable individualist who happens to have a private taste for good-bad movies. Yet he is presumably familiar with *Midi-Minuit Fantastique*, and it seems to me disingenuous of him not to put his readers on to a group of critics who strongly share some of his predilections and whose vigour can impel one to think profitably about the role of the fantastic and horrific in cinema.

If SIGHT AND SOUND had a sharply defined theoretical line of its own such omissions might be excusable. In a journal which purports to be broadly informative, however, they seem to me yet another deplorable example of what happens when unacknowledged and undefended prejudices are hidden behind a mask of well-mannered catholicity. It is tempting to suppose that one of the reasons for SIGHT AND SOUND's fixation on the *Cahiers* critics is that some of them actually, in one sense, Made Good; I mean, they fulfilled the ambition that most of us have presumably had ourselves at one time or another and Made Movies. As the example of *Scrutiny* should remind one, however, being over-tender to the practitioners of an art isn't necessarily the best service that a critical journal can do it.

Moreover, to come back to the French journals, I feel that in the long run the atmosphere of a journal like *Positif* is in fact more conducive to the making of significant movies than that of *Cahiers*. One can get pretty fed up, of course, with the Terrain-Vague kind of post-Surrealist position, especially when one of its manifestations is so inept and unpleasant a book as de Coulteray's *Sadisme au Cinéma*. But at least it is still revolutionary in a way that seems to me invaluable in de Gaulle's France, needed even in Wilson's England, and absent altogether from *Cahiers*. Is the running down of the *Cahiers* spirit that you take cognisance of in your latest issue really so surprising? And shouldn't SIGHT AND SOUND have been much more alert to its weaknesses all along? I infer, despite the demonstration of solidarity by your critics about *Bande à Part*, that a change is now coming, but it is always rather depressing to find British journals moving so obviously in the rear of continental opinion. Had SIGHT AND SOUND been less one-sided in its sympathies, incidentally, its recognition of Feuillade as a major energising force might have come sooner; Kyrrou praised him in the most exciting terms over a decade ago.

This brings me to my last example of the quiet boycotting that has gone on in SIGHT AND SOUND during the years in which I have subscribed to it. The director among those mentioned in Jacob's article who is most obviously not running down is Franju. I was grateful for the stills from *Judex* last year, of course, but they are

almost literally the only acknowledgment of Franju's existence that I have come across in your pages in three and a half years: even *Thérèse Desqueyroux* has gone undiscussed. To suggest that *Les Yeux Sans Visage* is one of the finest achievements in French cinema since the Nouvelle Vague began may seem to you merely eccentric. So too, no doubt, will the suggestion that Buache is essentially right when he insists that "si l'on songe à la gratuité généralisée qui caractérise aujourd'hui le cinéma français, il n'en faut pas plus pour placer Franju, avec Alain Resnais, au premier rang des créateurs cinématographiques de son pays." I am certain, however, that great movies grow only out of passion and a deeply humane system of values; and I am sure that an aspiring young movie-maker nowadays would be far better off frequenting the works of Franju and the interviews with him in the French journals (including *Cahiers*) than the works of Godard.

In sum, the unexplained partisanship and genteel censorship that inform your pages seem to me not only inexcusable as critical procedures; they are also surely doing a serious disservice to that evolution of a healthy British cinema that you are endeavouring to foster.

Yours faithfully,

Dalhousie University,
Halifax, N.S.

JOHN FRASER

Two factual points, SIGHT AND SOUND's "recognition of Feuillade" was delayed, of necessity, until the National Film Theatre had been able to screen the films. And Franju's *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (see review on page 93) has also taken a long time to reach us.—EDITOR

Goldfinger

SIR,—The difference between the Bond films and Ian Fleming's books is no doubt all that Penelope Houston in her perceptive article (SIGHT AND SOUND, Winter 1965) says it is. But I wonder if it isn't more radical, and less to the film-makers' credit as adaptors, than she suggests.

Fleming's books, after all, are mostly about sophisticated animality: Bond as Barracuda-Dodger (*Live and Let Die*), James the Giant-Squid-Killer (*Dr. No*); and Mr. Big and Dr. No and the rest of the criminal master-minds come in as humanoid mutations of the animal predator. In *Diamonds Are Forever* Bond's duel with the Spangled Mob is clearly framed within an account of a scorpion killing a beetle, then being killed by a man, who is killed by Spang, who is killed by Bond. And all Bond's exploits, gladiatorial or sexual (Bond as man-killer, Bond as woman-eater), and all his consumer appetites (creature comforts are to the strong), are obviously functions of an animal instinct for winning and surviving.

True, some tension is set up between primitive animality and technical sophistication, between tooth-and-claw and gun-and-car. But what comes of it? The excruciating trials of endurance that Bond is put through from *Casino Royale* (where the strain is for once testicular) onwards are all explicitly animal. And his acute sporting habits, gambling, skin-diving, fast driving, golfing, are only a mock-up of the struggle for survival that is always to come. Fleming's way of managing the sophisticated world made by modern technology is on some grossly simplified model of the animal kingdom made by Darwin—which is where critics of his ethos swoop in. The survivor is the one who consumes the goods. "There are moments of great luxury in the life of a secret agent." But—"How have you been, James? Your health, I mean."

Now as Miss Houston points out, nobody in the *Goldfinger* film worries about 007's or anybody's health. The big worrier, other than Goldfinger, is the Q branch man who wants his expensive trick car back in one piece. On the screen one sees no healthy animality—let alone humanity—worth worrying about. Instead there is that dazzling, almost continuous display of gadgetry. The film is all about Bond's exploits as an impromptu gadgeteer: the heater in the bathtub, the power line connected to the grill. These, and the bullet through the pressurised cabin, are very ingenious disposal gadgets . . . Goldfinger, who is not so much a great predator as a gadgetomane, finally loses to Bond because he is really only good at pre-meditated gadgets: solid gold Rolls, laser beam, jet plane, revolving briefing room, car crusher, and The Bomb. The mirror on the bend that stops the Aston Martin is a fluke.

Gadgetry on this scale, we can all see, is highly pictorial. But I don't see why the finders of this cinematic solution for the "non-adaptability" of Fleming's literary appeal should be given any credit for turning the "legend of sex, violence, etc. . . . into a frantic joke." In *Goldfinger* how much screen room do they leave for the human animals who might enact sex and violence? The first girl we see in Bond's arms has her eyeball used as a rearview mirror. Each

of the Masterson girls enters his life behind an eye-filling gadget that she operates and Bond takes over. And Pussy Galore patently belongs behind a set of controls. As a sex cat she doesn't begin to exist. Her psycho-sexual conversion, which is the crux of the whole plot, occurs off-screen. Pussy Galore indeed! Little Miss Piston Ring would be more to the point.

And with animality left out, how many jokes on gadgetry do the finders of this highly pictorial solution show us? The one about not knowing how to shut off The Bomb; which was on poor old Bond; and who laughed? When I saw the film nobody much laughed or applauded ironically after the first pre-credit trick with the heater. Most of the time we were doing what I think the makers meant us to do—goggling like a magic lantern audience at one marvel of modern gadgetology after another, with only the odd grimace for the displaced gadgetocracy . . .

Such a solution cuts out old-fashioned moral criticism all right. The trouble is it also cuts out what makes comparable adaptations like *The Maltese Falcon* or *The Big Sleep* satisfying to see: a combination of excitement and wit that is cinematic because it is about what is shown on the screen, not what, as in *Goldfinger*, is left out.

Yours faithfully,

Amherst,
Massachusetts.

JOHN OFFORD

'Time' and 'Motion'

SIR,—The phrase "Orson Welles of Z pictures", which provided me with a title and a first sentence in my recent Corman article, came not from Raymond Durnat but from *Time* Magazine. Indeed Roger Corman is one of the directors about whom I have never read Mr. Durnat's opinions, in *Motion* or elsewhere, until his letter in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND. The *Time* piece was provided for my reference by the B.F.I.'s Information Department. Offhand I've no way of telling who coined the phrase first (it's certainly been borrowed several times since); but if *Time* borrowed it from Mr. Durnat then he will be flattered, I am sure. As occasionally I am, when other critics quote me.

I'm not in a position to comment on the rest of Mr. Durnat's letter, since I regret to say I don't entirely follow it. But then, even if I had heard of Inez Foss, I doubt whether Mr. Durnat and I can ever be expected to see eye to eye.

Yours faithfully,

London, S.W.10.

PETER JOHN DYER

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

UNITED ARTISTS for *Kiss Me, Stupid, The Night of the Hunter, Went the Day Well?*, Dodsworth.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *The Patsy, The Geisha Boy, The Bellboy, The Scarlet Empress*, photograph of Jerry Lewis.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte, Shock Corridor, Daisy Kenyon, A Girl in Every Port*.
M.G.M. for *The Giant of Marathon*, photograph of Lillian Gish and Greta Garbo.
WARNER-PATHE for *My Fair Lady, To Have and Have Not, The Big Sleep*.
RKO-RADIO PICTURES for *The Magnificent Ambersons, Sudden Fear*.
BLC/BRITISH LION for *Hamlet* (Kozintsev).
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *The Man in Grey, Love Story, Hamlet* (Olivier).
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Une Femme Mariée, Thérèse Desqueyroux*.
BARGATE FILMS for *Throne of Blood*.
CONNOISSEUR FILMS/RIZZOLI for *The Red Desert*.
VILLANI FILM for *Cronaca di un Amore*.
PALLADIUM PRODUCTIONS/A. Z. DISTRIBUTORS for *Gertrud*.
SALEM PRODUCTIONS for *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold*.
SVENSK FILMINDUSTRI for *It Can't Happen Here*.
INTERNACIONAL FILMS/PIERRE BILLARD for *Chimes at Midnight*.
UNIFRANCE FILM for *Thomas l'Imposteur*, photograph of Bardot-Moreau press conference.
CAHIERS DU CINEMA/ALAIN TRESSAIS for *Project One*.
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE for *King Lear*.
CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE/NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Madame Bovary*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *The Taming of the Shrew, Quai des Brumes, The Black Cat, Go West, Musketeers of Pig Alley, My Man, Les Vampires, Tih Minh, Les Parents Terribles, The General, Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

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THE LANDSCAPE OF THE DESERT

continued from page 81

things which now call for a subtler and more precise form of demonstration, if we are to accept them as part of the malaise of the new technocracy.

"Not to think is to be dead, and the dead are not ordinary people," says Giuliana. In this world of walking wounded, the mind is the first casualty; and *The Red Desert* presents a study of a mind rocking on its foundations, shaken by fears as nameless and inexplicable as that cry out of the fog heard and forgotten during the arid Sunday roistering in the red-walled shack on the docks. But the dislocated mind cannot quite so automatically be related to the dislocated landscape, where the glittering radio towers and the man-made islands rise from the industrial sludge, and the birds no longer fly through the lethal fumes from the refineries.

In *The Eclipse* Antonioni held all the forces at his disposal in a fine, precarious equilibrium: characters and setting interlocked, as in the child's demonstration in *The Red Desert* that two drops of coloured liquid, coalescing on a microscope slide, add up to not two but one. This time, the effect ought to be similar, but the forces are pulling in different directions, and the centre fails to hold. Part of the problem, perhaps, arises from the central split in Antonioni's own mind: he senses the technological change as a vague threat, which he cannot pin down or isolate, and against which he can only utter the muffled warnings of a hesitant Cassandra. But he reacts positively and directly to the calm geometrical promise it holds out, and to its alien fascinations. He would not himself choose to retreat to that magical empty beach of Monica Vitti's nursery story.

* * *

Antonioni is a complex artist who can be extraordinarily naïve. He is also, and to his finger-tips, a film-maker, catching his dissolving world through images of space and light and time. *The Red Desert* is a film of unresolved tensions, of gaping fissures between what appears on the screen and the elusive mental image not of a brave but a timorous new world. But its power is in the act of seeing, in those haunting images of a desperate beauty, threatening or threatened. A no-colour street, blank and desolate, like an avenue in a cemetery; a grey ambulance coming out of the fog on a quayside; a warehouse piled with yellow baskets and glittering green glass, where a group of men are wondering whether, if they go to work in South America, they can still get TV and the Italian sports news; a line of pine trees, and a ship sailing through them. A cold landscape, caught in the grip of winter: a desert on the far side of the moon.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars

BALLAD IN BLUE (Warner-Pathé) Blind pianist Ray Charles (as himself) helps a little boy to come to terms with blindness. Gauche and improbable tear-jerker, but the music has its moments. (Tom Bell, Mary Peach, Dawn Addams; director, Paul Henreid.)

***BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ, THE** (Fox) Gaudily enjoyable if often boring historical fresco, unmistakably signed by Abel Gance; full of famous faces popping up for ten seconds to mouth vilely dubbed English. Lovely interior decor plus Orson Welles as an inventor trying to sell submarines to Napoleon. (Pierre Mondy, Martine Carol, Eastman Colour, Dyaliscope.) Reviewed.

***BONNE SOUPE, LA** (Fox) Saucy French film of Félicien Marceau's play, chronicling a tart's progress through an all-star cast. The great Marie Bell, surrounded by lots of veteran loved ones, raises it to the level of real nostalgic entertainment. (Annie Girardot, Claude Dauphin, Bernard Blier, Raymond Pellegrin, Franchot Tone; director, Robert Thomas.) Reviewed.

***COMEDY OF TERRORS, THE** (Warner-Pathé) Patchy horror comedy, with director Jacques Tourneur by no means at his best. Nice moments from Peter Lorre as a coffin-proud undertaker's assistant, and Basil Rathbone as a landlord given to performing Shakespeare in his bedroom. (Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, Pathé Color, Panavision.)

CRACK IN THE WORLD (Paramount) Loads of hot air and contrived heroics as Dana Andrews slowly loses his wife and life while blowing holes in the Earth's core. Not much to look at, but there are tolerable fragments of suspense. (Janette Scott, Kieron Moore, Alexander Knox; director, Andrew Marton. Technicolor.)

CURSE AND THE COFFIN, THE (Antony Balch) Legitimately re-titled adaptation of John Dickson Carr's *The Burning Court*, marking Julien Duvivier's hopeful but none too happy return to the Black Forest. The script and cast soon get bogged down in indigestible explanations and occult happenings. (Nadja Tiller, Jean-Claude Brialy, Edith Scob.)

***DEAR BRIGITTE** (Fox) Comedy of the two cultures, with poet-professor James Stewart horrified to find he has fathered a mathematical prodigy; but the boy turns out to have a crush on B.B., proving he must be an all-American male after all. Over-long and flatly directed by Henry Koster, but fair fun. (Billy Mumy, Glynis Johns, DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

FAIL SAFE (BLC/Columbia) Or how the switch jammed and the American bombers got through to Moscow. Staunch playing by Henry Fonda, this time safely in the White House; but no competition likely to cause Kubrick any concern. (Dan O'Herlihy, Walter Matthau; director, Sidney Lumet.) Reviewed.

***FANATIC** (BLC/Columbia) Tallulah Bankhead roars to a Baby Jane comeback as a religious maniac determined to prevent her dead son's fiancée from contamination by other men. Excellent performances by Stefanie Powers and Yootha Joyce help to anchor a film which wavers from parody to Grand Guignol and worse. (Peter Vaughan; director, Silvio Narizzano. Technicolor.)

***FLAMING YEARS, THE** (Cinerama) Yulia Solntseva, Dovzhenko's widow, makes a gallant attempt to realise one of his old scenarios, but puts in all the semi-Stalinist bits one hopes he would have left out. Vast 70 mm. battle scenes presumably account for its unlikely tenancy of the Coliseum. (Nikolai Vingranovsky, Zinaida Kirienko. Sovcolor, 70 mm. presented in Cinerama.) Reviewed.

GOODBYE CHARLIE (Fox) Stuck with an aimless George Axelrod joke about a womaniser who is reincarnated, all memories intact, as a woman, Minnelli hovers between comedy, drama and sentiment, failing to conceal the fact that the subject, if workable at all, needs either Wilder to dirty it up or Cukor, Grant, Hepburn and Stewart, c. 1939, to give it class. (Tony Curtis, Debbie Reynolds, Pat Boone. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

GOOD NEIGHBOUR SAM (BLC/Columbia) Slightly off-target comedy about suburban and advertising agency morals, with Jack Lemmon as wholesome as ever and Edward G. Robinson too upright to be true. (Romy Schneider, Dorothy Provine; director, David Swift. Eastman Colour.)

*****HAMLET** (BLC/British Lion) Hamlet as a positive hero has drawbacks, but Soviet veteran Grigori Kozintsev makes his Denmark a believable hotbed of intrigue, and brings off some splendid flourishes. Imposing 'scope vistas of sea and rock enclose a puppet-like Ophelia and a magnificent Romantic Ghost; great Shostakovich score. (Innokenti Smoktunovskii, Anastasia Vertinskaya.)

*****HARAKIRI** (Gala) A violent, full-blooded attack on Japanese military ethics; slow, stylised, and as fascinatingly ritualistic as *harakiri* itself. Likely to be remembered for the most graphic disembowelling sequence yet (did the actor really do it?). Tatsuya Nakadai, Shima Iwashita; director, Masaki Kobayashi. Shochiku Grandscope.)

HIGH BRIGHT SUN, THE (Rank) Political thriller, set in the Cyprus troubles, which dodges the political issues and also fails to thrill. Well enough acted by Dirk Bogarde, Denholm Elliott, Nigel Stock. (Susan Strasberg; director, Ralph Thomas. Technicolor.)

KALI-YUG, GODDESS OF VENGEANCE (BLC/British Lion) British Raj versus Indian Thuggery, unhappily enacted by an international cast. Long, dreary, and with the delectable-sounding Kali-Yug failing to materialise; but the Indian trimmings are handsome. (Paul Guers, Senta Berger, Ian Hunter; director, Mario Camerini. Technicolor.)

***KILLERS, THE** (Rank) Remake of the Hemingway story. Splendid opening sequence; Lee Marvin and Clu Gulager excellent throughout as the hired assassins; otherwise only middling. (John Cassavetes, Angie Dickinson, Ronald Reagan; director, Don Siegel. Technicolor print.)

***KISS ME, STUPID** (United Artists) The Billy Wilder/I. A. L. Diamond brand of bitter sweetness at its blackest and most ribald. Dean Martin brilliantly repulsive as a randy pop singer, and Kim Novak quite touching as "Polly the Pistol" with a heart of gold. (Ray Walston, Felicia Farr. Panavision.) Reviewed.

***LORD JIM** (BLC/Columbia) Luxuriantly shot but otherwise flabby version of Conrad's novel, offering Peter O'Toole another excuse to display mystic masochism. James Mason's river pirate ambles sardonically away with any acting honours. (Paul Lukas, Eli Wallach, Curt Jurgens; director, Richard Brooks. Technicolor, Panavision 70.)

MARY POPPINS (Disney) Sugar-coated musical which, despite the perfect poise of Julie Andrews, endows P. L. Travers's magical English nanny with the soul of mediocrity. (Dick Van Dyke, David Tomlinson, Glynis Johns; director, Robert Stevenson. Technicolor.)

****MY FAIR LADY** (Warner-Pathé) Rex Harrison's definitive Higgins, and Audrey Hepburn's up-and-down Eliza, preserved for eternity in yards of decor by Beaton. Cukor's contribution is mainly to steer tactfully, and the Ascot tea-party is a treat. (Stanley Holloway, Wilfrid Hyde-White, Gladys Cooper. Technicolor, Super-Panavision 70.) Reviewed.

***NONE BUT THE BRAVE** (Warner-Pathé) Frank Sinatra's sympathetic first attempt at direction. Crammed with errors, but the story—remnants of Japanese and American units stranded at opposite ends of a tiny island during World War II—is compulsive. (Clint Walker, Tatsuya Mihashi, Frank Sinatra. Technicolor, Panavision.)

*****PARAPLUIES DE CHERBOURG, LES** (Bargate) The girl from the umbrella shop in Cherbourg sees her lover off to the army, then marries elsewhere for security. Jacques Demy's all-singing operetta, as pretty, fragile and enchantingly coloured as the umbrella shop's own wares. (Catherine Deneuve, Anne Vernon, Marc Michel. Eastman Colour.)

*****RED DESERT, THE** (Connoisseur) Monica Vitti in modern Ravenna. Her case may not greatly advance Antonioni's thesis about the pressures of industrial living, but the film is extraordinarily beautiful and audacious. Must be seen. (Richard Harris, Carlo De Prà. Eastman Colour.) Reviewed.

RELUCTANT SAINT, THE (Gala) Desperately earthbound whimsy about an Italian village idiot's literal levitation to sainthood. (Maximilian Schell, Ricardo Montalban, Akim Tamiroff; director, Edward Dmytryk.)

***RONDE, LA** (BLC/Columbia) The Vadim version, in which you can hardly see the Schnitzler play for the upholstery. Rather pretty in a self-conscious way, cool performance by Catherine Spaak, and many a nudge and wink from the director. (Anna Karina, Jane Fonda, Jean-Claude Brialy. Eastman Colour, print by Technicolor.)

ROUNDERS, THE (M-G-M) Amiable comedy-Western with Henry Fonda and Glenn Ford as two cowboys who tangle with a strong-willed horse. Rather cramped in style, and saddled with a repellently whimsical score. (Chill Wills, Edgar Buchanan; director, Burt Kennedy. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

***SEDUCED AND ABANDONED** (BLC/British Lion) Familiar Sicilian hullabaloo, after father learns that his daughter has been seduced by her sister's fiancé: twice as noisy as *Divorce—Italian Style*, but only half as funny. (Stefania Sandrelli, Saro Orzi; director, Pietro Germi.)

*****THERESE DESQUEYROUX** (Gala) Franju's beautifully evocative, extremely faithful, but utterly Franju adaptation of Mauriac's novel. Emmanuèle Béatrice and the brooding landscape of Les Landes share the acting honours. (Philippe Noiret, Edith Scob.) Reviewed.

******TOKYO STORY, THE** (Contemporary) Here at last!—the film that introduced Europe to Yasujiro Ozu. His immobile camera, uniquely alive, somehow turns the simple story of an old couple's last visit to the city into a dazzling poem, rich in elegiac calm. (Chishu Ryu, Setsuko Hara.)

***WINNETOU THE WARRIOR** (BLC/British Lion) German Western, and not at all bad either, with chases, gun fights, Indian pursuits and a double-dyed villain (Mario Adorf) who stalks around in black until he falls off a cliff on to Indian lances. (Lex Barker, Pierre Brice, Marie Versini; director, Harald Reinl. Eastman Colour, CinemaScope.)

YELLOW ROLLS-ROYCE, THE (M-G-M) Three Rattigan anecdotes, set back twenty or thirty years but looking a lot older. Nice playing by George C. Scott and Shirley MacLaine, as gangster and moll, and eccentric appearance by Ingrid Bergman, as a millionaire ferrying partisans in the Rolls. (Rex Harrison, Jeanne Moreau; director, Anthony Asquith. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

YOUNG CASSIDY (M-G-M) Or the Ford film that never was. Substitute director Jack Cardiff lets in all the budding author clichés, fails to indicate that Cassidy is O'Casey, and gets a tepid Irish atmosphere in spite of all the Irishry. (Rod Taylor, Maggie Smith, Michael Redgrave. Metrocolor.) Reviewed.

ZORBA THE GREEK (Fox) Pretentious and painfully overlong adaptation of Kazantzakis's book, with Anthony Quinn as the huge, lusty Greek who teaches a timid young English writer (Alan Bates) how to live, laugh and love. Beautiful Cretan photography by Walter Lassally. (Irene Papas, Lila Kedrova; director, Michael Cacoyannis.)

PART TWO

**CRITIC'S
CHOICE**

**NFT
SOUTH BANK
MAY-JUNE 1965**

PETER BAKER: **El Cochecito** .
Face in the Crowd . **Orders To**
Kill . **Some Like It Hot** . **This**
Sporting Life FELIX BARKER:
Brief Encounter . **Duck Soup** .
The Fallen Idol . **La Kermesse**
Héroïque . **The 39 Steps**
PATRICK GIBBS: **La Bête**
Humaine . **La Fin du Jour** .
Poil de Carotte . **Quai des**
Brumes . **Une Vie** PENELOPE
HOUSTON: **Cronaca di un**
Amore . **Heller in Pink**
Tights . **Kanchenjanga** .
Summer Holiday . **Went the**
Day Well? PHILIP OAKES: **The**
Apartment . **Jules et Jim** .
Murder Inc. . **Scarface** . **3.10**
to Yuma . ISABEL QUIGLY:
Brief Encounter . **Paisa** . **Poil**
de Carotte . **Rebecca of**
Sunnybrook Farm . **A Star is**
Born DAVID ROBINSON: **All**

Quiet on the Western Front . **Love Me Tonight** . **A Star is Born** . **Wagonmaster** .
The Young One KENNETH TYNAN: **Cabin in the Sky** . **Destry Rides**
Again . **Drôle de Drame** . **So This is New York** . **To Have and Have Not**

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MONICA VITTI and RICHARD HARRIS
in
MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI'S
first colour film

THE RED DESERT^(X)

"IL DESERTO ROSSO"

Grand Prix - Venice Film Festival 1964